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WOMEN IN ENGLISH LIFE

From Mediæval to Modern Times.

BY

GEORGIANA HILL,

AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF ENGLISH DRESS."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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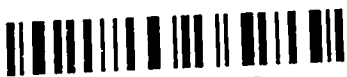
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WOMEN IN ENGLISH LIFE.

Sir J. Reynolds, pinxt. J. Cook, sculp.

Georgiana

DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

PERIOD III.

LIFE IN THE LAST CENTURY (continued).

CHAPTER III.

THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF WOMEN.

PAGE

Meaning of the word "politics"—Position and influence of the Saxon queens—The three Norman queens—The Plantagenet queens—The rule of the Hanoverians—Politicians of the last century—Interest in politics confined to the upper classes—The Duchess of Marlborough—Her opinion of women—Influence of Dissenters in politics—The Countess of Suffolk—Lady Hervey—The Countess of Huntingdon storms the House of Lords—The Westminster election—The Duchess of Devonshire 3

CHAPTER IV.

THE BAS-BLEU.

View of literature by the fashionable world—Influence of France—Lady Mary Montagu on women's position—Women afraid of the reputation of learning—The dread of work—Conception of gentility—Mrs. Chapone on women's studies—The literary coterie: Lady Mary Montagu, Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, Elizabeth Carter, Mrs. Vesey, Hannah More, Mrs. Chapone, Miss Talbot—Origin of the term "Bas-bleu"—Miss Carter on the follies of society 40

CHAPTER V.

THE PHILANTHROPISTS.

PAGE

The beginnings of organized philanthropy—Hannah More and her sisters—Mary Carpenter—Mrs. Trimmer—Elizabeth Fry—Harriet Martineau—Miss Florence Nightingale—Mrs. Josephine Butler 59

CHAPTER VI.

SERMONS IN DRAWING-ROOMS.

Formalism and inertness of the Church — Societies for the advancement of religion confined to men—Movements outside the Church—The Countess of Huntingdon and Whitfield—Great ladies' opinions of the Methodist preachers—Attitude of the upper classes towards religious movements—Condition of the Clergy 75

PERIOD IV.

WOMEN IN THE VICTORIAN ERA.

CHAPTER I.

CHANGE OF IDÉAL.

Change in women's position in this century—Women's status in the past determined by the Church—De Ségur on Englishwomen—Change of thought and customs—Women in the middle classes—Enlargement of interests among the middle classes—Single women as described by Jane Austen—Marriage as a career for women—Change of opinion—The wives of to-day—Social life—Independence of unmarried women 87

CHAPTER II.

THE MODERN GREAT LADY.

Fusion of classes—Social progress—Modification of women's position in the higher ranks—Duties of the modern great lady—Her new *rôle* 105

CHAPTER III.

WOMEN AS TRAVELLERS AND EXPLORERS.

PAGE

English enterprise and love of travel—Travelling for pleasure a modern taste—Ida Pfeiffer—Lady Hester Stanhope—Miss Bird—Miss Annie Taylor—Lady Baker—Lady Euan Smith—Lady Sale—Miss Kingsley 116

CHAPTER IV.

EDUCATIONAL ADVANCE.

Modern methods in women's education compared with the past—A French author's opinion of education in England—Some causes of progress—Character of the new education—The days of Mary Somerville and Caroline Herschell—Their election as members of the Astronomical Society—Mrs. Somerville's education—Opening of Queen's College—Origin of Girton—Foundation of Newnham—Character of modern education 133

CHAPTER V.

WOMEN IN LITERATURE.

The branches of literature in which women have been most distinguished—The first professional woman writer—Influence of public sentiment—Position of literary women in the eighteenth century—Anecdote by Lord Granville—Influence of women in literature—The new school of fiction—Rapid advance of women in all branches of literature 149

CHAPTER VI.

ART AS A PROFESSION.

The stage as a profession for women—The progress of art—Opening of the Royal Academy schools to female students—Society of Lady Artists—Women as musicians—Composers in the first half of the century—Queen Victoria's pianoforte instructress—The musical amateur 162

CHAPTER VII.

THE GENTLEWOMAN IN TRADE.

PAGE

The old idea of a gentlewoman—Change in public sentiment—New openings for women—Women as telegraph clerks—Women in the post-office—Indignation of the male clerks—Dame Willatt and the Manchester post-office—Female clerks in the Bank of England—The gentlewoman in trade—Greater freedom enjoyed by women in choice of occupation 176

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MODERN WOMAN OF BUSINESS.

Changes in the occupations of women—The number of women employed in industries—Working wives—Trades recently opened to women—Women as compositors and type-writers—The modern shop-assistant—Trades now followed by women—The change of opinion as to women's occupations 187

CHAPTER IX.

THE FACTORY HAND.

Importance of the industrial as compared with the agricultural class—Women's position in the industrial market—Effects of machinery and the factory system on women's work—Break-up of family life—The factory question a woman's question—Women's preference for outside work—Industrial legislation—Attitude of women workers 195

CHAPTER X.

THE DOMESTIC SERVANT.

Position of the domestic servant—More men formerly employed in domestic service—The *demoiselles* and *chambrières* of former days—Servants in Elizabethan days—Interior of Hengrave Hall in the seventeenth century—Duties of maid-servants in 1677—Servants' dress regulated—Want of good servants in the last century—Defoe's observations on servants—A foreigner's opinion of English servants—Complaints of servants' costume—Registry-offices of the last century—Servants' wages—Where our servants come from—Domestic service at the present day 208

CHAPTER XI.

THE MODERN HUMANITARIAN MOVEMENT.

PAGE

Capacity of women for organization — Character of modern philanthropy—Women the mainspring of the Humanitarian Movement—Baroness Burdett-Coutts—Miss Octavia Hill—Miss Emma Cons—The Moral Movement—Mrs. Butler and Miss Ellice Hopkins—Temperance work—Associations for the benefit of girls—Miss Frances Power Cobbe on women's work 227

CHAPTER XII.

THE SISTERHOOD SYSTEM.

Revival of religious orders—The Anglican sisterhoods—Clewer and Harriet Monsell—Bishop Wordsworth on sisterhoods—Growth of the sisterhood system—"Sisters" in the hospitals —Significance of the movement 237

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FREEDOM OF DISSENT.

Scope for women's activities among the Dissenting communities —Women in the pulpit—Equality of men and women in the Salvation Army—Women as missionaries—Pioneers in the mission field — Women's position in the Nonconformist Churches of the present day 246

CHAPTER XIV.

WOMAN AS NURSE.

Nursing only recently made a profession—Miss Nightingale on the lack of training—Want of trained nurses in workhouses —Origin of the Nurses' Training Institution at St. Thomas's —Work of the sisterhoods—The early hospitals at religious houses—Treatment of lepers—Decline of nursing—The Crimean War period—Ancient and modern conception of nursing—The Franco-German War and Mrs. Dacre Craven —James Hinton on nursing—The Royal National Pension Fund—Miss Twining and workhouse nurses—Nursing as a profession for gentlewomen—Crushing out of the amateur .. 256

CHAPTER XV.

WOMAN AS DOCTOR.

PAGE

Medicine the only one of the learned professions open to women —Women students of medicine in Italy—Midwifery in England—Witchcraft and medicine—Midwives of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—Female surgeons—The modern medical movement—Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell—Dr. Garrett Anderson—Dr. Sophia Jex-Blake and the fight in Edinburgh —The London School of Medicine—Public appointments held by women 271

CHAPTER XVI.

WOMEN AND MODERN POLITICS.

Changes of the last half-century—Women's political organizations —Women and the Primrose League—The Women's Liberal Federation—Lady Unionists—The political education of women 292

CHAPTER XVII.

WOMEN AND PUBLIC WORK.

Women on public boards—School Board work—Early members of the School Board—Women as Poor-law Guardians: their increased numbers—Appointment of women as Factory Inspectors—Women as Sheriffs in the time of the Plantagenets —The offices of Marshal, King's Champion, and High Constable held by women—A female Sexton—Women's capacity for public work 307

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CLAIM FOR POLITICAL EQUALITY.

Origin of the claim—Mary Woollstonecraft—The Anti-Slavery Convention—John Stuart Mill and the first Woman's Suffrage Petition—*The Times* on Woman's Suffrage—The question in Parliament—The Scotch workers—Women electors in olden times—Women voters of this century—Miss Lydia Becker's work—The Suffrage Societies—Irish workers— Incidents of the work in Scotland—Condorcet and Mr. Lecky on Woman's Suffrage 323

PERIOD III.

LIFE IN THE LAST CENTURY.

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Meaning of the word politics—Position and influence of the Saxon queens—The three Norman queens—The Plantagenet queens—The rule of the Hanoverians—Politicians of the last century—Interest in politics confined to the upper classes—The Duchess of Marlborough—Her opinion of women—Influence of Dissenters in politics—The Countess of Suffolk—Lady Hervey—The Countess of Huntingdon storms the House of Lords—The Westminster election—The Duchess of Devonshire.

In sketching the part women have played in politics, it must be premised that the word politics is used with a wider signification than is attached to it in modern times. The original meaning of the word—public as opposed to private, the life of the State as distinct from the life of the individual—covers a large field of activity. Without attempting the impossible task of describing all

the manifold ways in which women have worked in this field—which would involve, among other things, penetration into State intrigues and foreign diplomacy—some outline may be given of their share in the making of history.

In earlier ages the life of the State was the life of the people. Every citizen of every city in Greece had a voice in directing the destinies of his country. In early England the civil polity was a polity composed of the people and the people's representatives. The principle was the same, and the change to a more aristocratic form was only effected by the retention of a large measure of the democratic principle.

From Saxon times downwards, women in England have not had any direct and recognized share in the national councils, assemblies, and parliaments, except to a limited extent by virtue of being property-holders, or persons of rank whose hereditary titles conferred on them certain privileges and burdens. The influence of women on politics, speaking generally, has been, and is still, of an indirect kind.

Queens, however, do not come within this category. Whether queens of the country or queens from foreign lands, their influence has been direct and personal. And yet we have had very

few queens-regnant. Boadicea, who reigned over the tribe of the Iceni, is the solitary instance in English history for fifteen centuries. With the exception of Saxburga, widow of Cenwalch of Wessex, who was sovereign for one year, and was then thrust from the throne by the disdainful nobles, who refused to fight under a woman, no queen sat on the throne of England save as a consort until Mary Tudor.

It has been remarked that the fame of England has never been greater among the nations than when a woman has been at the head of the State. Boadicea, in person, led one of the most determined attacks which the Roman legions ever had to face. When they landed they were met by women waving lighted torches, and men led into the hottest of the fight by a woman whose indomitable spirit had aroused to vengeance a people sunk in slavery to the conquerors of the world. Her husband dead, her daughters outraged, her priests slain, her people sold into bondage, Boadicea lived only for revenge, and having escaped death in battle, inflicted it with her own hands rather than fall into those of the Romans.

The annals of Saxon days show us no such heroic figure as that of Boadicea. The scene has changed. We have no longer the spectacle of a

rude, daring race fighting on their own soil, under their own leaders, for their own homes, against a powerful, civilized, organized force. The Britons have retreated to their fastnesses—such of them as have survived the shock of war—the Romans have returned to their own land, and another nation—or, rather, a number of tribes having one common home—are in possession of the country. England is ruled by kinglets, all fighting for mastery, while in the midst of this perpetually recurring civil strife another struggle is going on, the struggle between the old and the new religion, between the riotous joys of Valhalla and the peaceful delights of Paradise, between Wodin and Christ.

Both in the governance of the kingdom and in matters of religion the queens of the Saxons played an important part, and exercised a good deal of influence over the course of history. Without Queen Bertha, Augustine and his fifty monks and interpreters might never have accomplished their mission, and would certainly not have received permission to build a monastery in the city of Canterbury. The curious intermingling of religion with politics is very marked in these early times. One of the most warlike of the Saxon queens, the wife of Ina, king of Wessex, the law-maker, persuaded her husband to abdicate, and embrace a

religious life. While there were enemies to fight she was in the forefront of the strife, attacking her foes in their strongholds, but having conquered, and secured a certain measure of peace, she not only laid down her weapons, but forced the king to resign his crown into the hands of another and spend the rest of his days with her in pious exercises.

Elfrida caused the assassination of her stepson, Edward the Martyr, to make way for her own son, Ethelred, and in the intervals of her murderous scheming and plotting fought the battles of the married priests against the monks. The Norman wife of Ethelred, Emma, changed the course of events in England by her strong anti-Saxon feeling, which caused her, after she became a widow, to disown her children and wed the famous Canute, thus bringing a new element into the national life. Her great political ally was Earl Godwin.

The Saxon queens were not called queens, though they exercised so much sovereign power. The wife of a Saxon monarch was styled simply "the Lady." It is said that the title of queen and equality of rank and honours were abolished owing to the fact that Brihtric, King of Wessex, was accidentally poisoned by his wife, who was compelled to flee the kingdom. An attempt was made in later times to restore to the Saxon queens their

privileges and title, but it was of no avail. The Witenagemot had shorn them of their glory, and they held simply the position of chief lady without any of the outward marks of royalty.*

Sometimes it was the striking personal qualities of the queens, their capacity for good or evil, that coloured the course of politics, sometimes merely their position as the members of rival houses. The intermarriages between Christian and Pagan were also potent factors in determining the relations between the various kingdoms into which Saxon England was divided. The sturdy old heathen, Penda, gave his daughter to the son of a Christian king, Oswy, who in return married his daughter to a son of Penda. Athelstan, grandson of Alfred the Great, gave his sister, a Christian princess, in marriage to a pagan and a murderer, the Danish pirate-king, Sigtryg, on condition that he should embrace Christianity. This unpromising convert soon tired of his new creed and his new wife, and renounced both. The daughters and sisters of kings have ever been, as it were, pawns for the preservation of the peace of the body politic, and in matters religious pontiffs without the name, for they were the real bridge-builders between dissentient faiths.

* Odell Travers Hill, "English Monasticism."

As we come to the consideration of the part played in politics by queens since the Conquest, two facts give us the key to the whole position. The first is that, with very few exceptions, we have had foreign queens whose conduct was generally guided by their sympathy with another land and people, and the second is that alliance by marriage with a rival power was productive of discord rather than peace. Although from the time of Stephen to the time of Edward IV. our queens were chiefly chosen from one or other of the great families of France, if not from the royal house itself, war was maintained against that country as against an hereditary enemy. For one hundred years it was almost constant, the short intervals being used for preparing fresh attacks.

England presented the picture of a house divided against itself. Far from creating amity between princes, our queens caused fresh quarrels. Disputes over dowries in the form of land, over marriage portions in the form of money and jewels, over honours bestowed on the family and friends of a foreign queen, over the presence of a large retinue of foreign attendants, were constantly inflaming the passion for fighting, which was the characteristic of the Middle Ages. A war frequently took the form of a family quarrel, which

was embittered by the fact that there was no common bond between the opposing factions, but only the tie of legal relationship.

The queens themselves played a very important part. Sometimes by words, more often by deeds, they changed and directed the course of history. Owing to wars abroad and dissensions at home, which caused the frequent absence of the kings, the position of the queens-consort became one of great responsibility. They were called upon to assume the sovereignty in England and to quiet disaffected provinces on the Continent. By their personal influence they were frequently able to raise supplies and collect adherents. To describe their various *rôles* would be to give a history of the times. But they were aliens, and though as queens of England they were bound up with the interests of the country, it is in their character as foreign princesses that their influence is most clearly traceable. Queens are a class apart, and foreign queens are separated by a double barrier from the people over whom they rule.

It was always the personal element in the war that roused the queens to action, and caused them to become such active participators in the deadly struggle for power. Politics—if the turmoils of those days can so be termed—meant quarrels

between sovereigns and other highly placed individuals over territory, power, wealth, and inheritance. It was to gain some private end, to win some coveted prize, to avenge some slight or injury that the queens-consort threw themselves with such ardour into perilous struggles, fought like Amazons, and intrigued like diplomatists. Matilda of Boulogne, the wife of Stephen; Isabella of France, the wife of Edward II.; Margaret of Anjou, the wife of Henry VI., stand out as conspicuous instances. No queens-consort had a larger share in the making of history. Two of them, Matilda and Margaret, fought for their husbands, Isabella fought *against* her husband. The whole course of events was changed by their action. Stephen might have languished in prison after the battle of Lincoln, in 1141, and been compelled to abdicate, had it not been for the vigour with which his queen carried on the campaign, and her persistency in effecting his release. Edward II. might have escaped a tragic death but for Isabella; and without Margaret the bitter war by which the Yorkists finally gained the supremacy would have come to a much speedier termination.

It may here be noted that this war about the succession in the reign of Stephen turned on the rights and privileges of a woman—the valiant

Empress Matilda, daughter of Henry I. The nobles who flocked to the standard of Stephen, after having sworn fealty to Matilda and her heirs, gave as an excuse for their treachery that it would be a shameful thing to submit to a woman. The prince to whom they transferred their allegiance owed the earldom of Boulogne to his wife. In default of male heirs, fiefs descended to the female next in line of succession.*

The three queens of the Norman kings, Matilda of Flanders, wife of William I.; Matilda of Scotland, wife of Henry I.; and Matilda of Boulogne, wife of Stephen, all exercised a remarkable influence on the country of their adoption. If Matilda of Boulogne was a good fighter, the two other Matildas were able administrators. Matilda of Flanders was frequently called upon to act in her husband's place both here and in Normandy. While William was trying to build up his position as King of England, disaffection arose in his dukedom of Normandy, and the only thing that he could do to pacify his turbulent subjects, who felt that they were being deserted by their chief, and deprived of a share in his new honours, was to send over his queen to live among them and direct the affairs of the kingdom. When his own presence again became necessary in

* Lyttelton's "Life of Henry II." Vol. I.

Normandy it was Matilda who ruled in England. The heavy responsibilities frequently cast upon her by William—one of the strongest of rulers—shows how judicious must have been her conduct.

It is to the queen of Henry I., Matilda of Scotland, that England is said to owe the first parliaments held under the Norman dynasty. Her share in the governance of the kingdom seems to have been considerable, and it was exerted in the best interests of the people. While favouring the restoration of the Saxon forms of legislature, she urged on the passing of other reforms. It was a rude age, and there was little help for the weak against oppression and insult by the strong. Matilda thought of her own sex, of the unprotected wives and daughters of the Saxons in the presence of an insolent, alien aristocracy, and she exerted herself to get laws passed which should save Englishwomen from the insults of the Normans.

The two Plantagenet queens most noted for their beneficent influence were neither of them French and neither of them politicians. Eleanor of Castile was the wife of the greatest soldier and the best ruler of the age—Edward I. She did not actively share in his exploits or interfere in the government of the kingdom. But she strengthened his hands, and enhanced the loyalty of the people

by the attachment which she won to herself. There was no jealousy of "Good Queen Eleanor," as of a foreigner with a retinue of strangers eating up the land. Her marriage caused no embroilments, and her death was universally regretted. Philippa of Hainault, the wife of the third Edward, is chiefly remembered for one deed of womanly tenderness which can hardly be construed into a political move. Her pleading for the brave citizens of Calais, who offered their lives for their fellow-townsmen, is a beautiful picture, but its chief significance lies in the test which it applies to the moral standard of the day. That an English king—and one of good repute—should have to be supplicated to refrain from an act of hideous barbarity towards a prostrate enemy is not an incident one would willingly recall. Philippa of Hainault was useful also to her English subjects. Coming as she did from the Low Countries, where the manufacture of cloth was far ahead of England, she was able to introduce improvements and give an impetus to the trade.

How little the fact of a French princess sharing the throne of England did to lessen the enmity felt against France may be judged from the case of Joanna of Navarre, the celebration of whose marriage with Henry IV. was disturbed by the clamours of a French war. The next queen,

Catherine of France, occupied a still harder position as the wife of the man who brought her country into the deepest humiliation.

The perpetual struggle to maintain sovereignty over France was, however, interrupted by an intestine war, and the history of English politics becomes the history of a long and bitter fight between opposing factions. The central figure in this fight is the renowned Margaret of Anjou. She was among the keenest of the politicians of her time, and united to the qualities of a statesman those of a soldier. Never had queen a more difficult part to play—the wife of a king who was only a ruler in name, and she herself a stranger and foreigner without wealth, compelled to battle for her own and her husband's rights.

After a lapse of some three hundred years we had again a succession of foreign queens. The wives of the Hanoverian kings were even more alien in sympathy and interest from the people of England than were the wives of the Plantagenet sovereigns. The one thorough politician among them, Caroline of Anspach, the wife of George II., was as completely German in heart as she was in blood. Her quick intellect enabled her to comprehend very accurately the position of public affairs in England, and the marvellous tact with

which she governed her husband made her the actual if not the nominal ruler. Being a woman of strong passions, she was very eager in the prosecution of political schemes, and very outspoken in her expression of opinion. She and Sir Robert Walpole managed everything between them. He was popularly known as the "Queen's Minister." Caroline's partiality for Walpole was probably due to the fact that it was owing to his influence that she enjoyed a jointure larger than any queen before her, viz. £100,000 a year. When her favourite Minister brought in his excise scheme, which excited great hostility in certain quarters, the House of Peers deputed Lord Stairs to wait upon the Queen and represent to Her Majesty the objections to the measure. He went, and was soundly rated for his pains. But in the endeavour to conceal his discomfiture he was foolish enough to boast that he had silenced the Queen by argument, hearing which Caroline retaliated by disclosing the whole nature of the interview, which Lord Stairs had entreated her not to divulge.

The Queen herself took the initiative when she deemed the occasion required her interference. The Dissenters petitioned for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts at an inconvenient moment for the Government, when a general

election was pending. Caroline and Sir Robert Walpole, with much dexterity, effected a compromise. The Dissenters relied on the Bishop of Salisbury to support their cause. The Queen sent for the bishop, and talked to him in a confidential tone about the inopportunity of the measure, so paving the way for Sir Robert Walpole, who, after some fencing, got the matter arranged to the satisfaction of the Government.

It is curious that for the Minister's brother, the famous Horace, Caroline had a great aversion, which she evinced in a coarse and offensive manner without the least attempt at concealment. Lord Hervey she admitted into great confidence, and would keep him chatting at her bedside about the news of the day when she was too ill to rise.

As for the three other Hanoverian queens, one of them, Sophia of Zell, wife of George I., never set foot in England at all, and was only queen in name. Her influence on English politics was *nil.* Queen Charlotte, being a quiet domestic character, was more concerned with the welfare of her family and the good ordering of her court than with State business. Her public acts were chiefly of a benevolent kind. When a bank broke at Windsor she sent money of her own to relieve the distressed holders of one pound notes, and out of her private

purse she established and supported a home for orphan girls of good birth. Her successor, "the injured queen," Caroline of Brunswick, is a conspicuous figure in history, but chiefly on account of her personal sufferings as a wife, and her remarkable trial. Family quarrels occupy a large portion of the annals of our Hanoverian sovereigns. The feuds between father and son, mother and daughter, husband and wife form the court life of the period. George I. and his son, with their rival courts at Hampton and Richmond, afford abundant food for the gossips. Caroline of Anspach's fiery temper, which broke out in invectives against her daughter, the Princess Amelia, and the Prince of Wales, flames down the page of history; while George IV.'s perfidies make a tragedy of his reign.

The only queen-consort who, during the absence of the king, was vested with sovereign power, under the title of Queen Regent, was Catherine Parr, the sixth wife of Henry VIII. Great as was the commotion caused by Henry's marriages and their abrupt dissolution, they affected domestic rather than national interests, the fate of great families more than that of the people. The queens themselves had but little influence upon political matters, with the exception of Catherine of Aragon, though they excited jealousy and animosity by their

position, and so caused intrigues among statesmen. They were the pivots of political parties, the centres of religious strife; but neither the first nor the last Catherine—the one a devout Romanist, the other a zealous Protestant—were able to effect much for their respective causes, while the four intervening queens had but a short-lived influence, and were chiefly occupied with their own misfortunes. It was not safe for Henry VIII.'s queens to be politicians.

The position of queens-regnant with regard to political life scarcely comes within the scope of the present purpose. A queen who reigns alone is, by necessity, a politician. She is the centre of the State, and, even if indifferent or incapable, must perforce not merely influence, but direct, the course of politics. We have never had a queen-regnant who was indifferent; and although Queen Anne is usually described as weak, and was undoubtedly governed by her favourites, she was extremely obstinate, and held strong, fixed opinions. Of the two Tudor queens, the one was a far-seeing, wide-minded politician—a match not only for the sovereigns, but for all the first Ministers of Europe. The other united to the Tudor talent and temper a deep and passionate religious fanaticism and a womanly yearning for personal happiness, which,

being unattainable, saddened and embittered her life. Queen Anne, although she succumbed to the influence of the quick-witted beauty who was the wife of the greatest general of the age, retained all her prepossessions, and in spite of the presence and counsels of the more free-thinking Sarah, was throughout a staunch Tory, an orthodox Church-woman, and a rigid Conservative in social matters.

When we reach the eighteenth century we hear no more of citizenesses presenting petitions; the interest of the middle classes in politics seems to have died out with the Civil War. But among women of the upper ranks it is keen and constant. Politics are both business and pleasure. Intrigue is rife, party feeling high, and every one directly or indirectly connected with the players in the game of politics is trying to aid or retard the movement, to gain some advantage, to avert some danger. In fact, the aristocracy *are* the political world, and in this world the great ladies who are the wives and daughters of Ministers and would-be statesmen, the women who aspire to places at court, and whose families are out of favour, are all seen swimming together in the sea of politics—some idly as for a pastime, others with straining nerves, as in a race.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century

politics and religion were once more closely intertwined. The High Church party were in the ascendant. Queen Anne and her ladies attending the trial of Dr. Sacheverell in support of his cause shows the drift in court circles. There was a bitter feeling against Dissent, which was regarded as a danger equivalent in another direction to Popery. Whatever threatened the Church threatened the State. This gave a new tone to politics. While the domination of Rome lasted there was always a power superior to that of the State—the power of the priest. The Anglican Church was not supreme; it was a partner with the State, but not on equal terms. Indeed it was more like a nursling. The cry of "the Church in danger" brought the State rallying to its aid, ready to do battle with its enemies.

Public interest was centred chiefly in the eighteenth century upon the foreign policy of the Government. In the previous century the civil war and home politics had absorbed all the attention; but the Hanoverian succession once established, there existed no domestic question of such vital import as had agitated the country during the Stuart dynasty. What distinguishes the eighteenth century in the eyes of posterity is that it was an age of great statesmen. The roll of

mediocre, respectable politicians fades away in the presence of their leaders. Great statesmen attract large followings, and inspire enthusiasm where principle fails to arouse more than languid interest. Politics took a very personal tone in the eighteenth century.

If the Duke of Marlborough was the first soldier of his age, the Duchess was undoubtedly the first stateswoman. Except Queen Elizabeth, she has no peer in English history. No other Englishwoman exercised such sway over politics as the beautiful Sarah, or held, as she did, the destinies of Europe in her hands.

"Women," wrote the Duchess, in the bitterness of her after life, "signify nothing, unless they are the mistress of a prince or first minister, which I would not be if I were young; and I think there are very few if any women that have understanding or impartiality enough to serve well those they really wish to serve."

In this lies the key to the age. Politically, women signified nothing in the last century, but as great ladies their influence in the political world was of the first moment.

In dealing with women's part in politics in the last century, it is only the upper classes who need be considered. The City dames who petitioned the Parliament and the Commonwealth are gone, and

their successors, good souls, have little care for public matters. Their families, their businesses, their toilettes, the cheery, gossipy intercourse with their neighbours are enough for them. Ease and comfort beget indifference. There is no desolating civil war; the country is growing prosperous, the national prestige is heightening. Politics have less of a domestic, more of an imperial aspect, and to the women of the *bourgeoisie* they seem remote, out of their purview. As Ferri de Saint Constant, who wrote at the close of the century, observed—

"Sans doute les femmes anglaises participent à l'esprit national, à l'esprit public, et ne sont point indifférentes aux intérêts de la patrie; mais ce qui fait le sujet de leur conversation, surtout à leurs parties de thé, ce sont les nouveaux romans, les nouvelles pièces de théâtre. Comme les hommes ne causent jamais avec les femmes, celles-ci n'ont aucun intérêt de se mettre au courant de ce qui fait le sujet de la conversation des hommes: elles doivent préférer de s'entretenir et entr'elles de ce qui est à la portée de toutes de ce qui est plus intéressant pour elles, ou du moins plus amusant." *

But with the women of the aristocracy it was otherwise. They, no doubt, chatted over their tea-tables about the last romance, the new play, the freshest scandal; the majority perhaps cared as little as did the tradesmen's and farmers' wives

* "Londres et les Anglais."

about matters outside their own circle; the difference was that their circle was a wider one, and that through their connections and friends they were always *en rapport* with the news of the day.

To the ordinary woman of fashion politics were an occasional diversion, and politicians were to be courted for the sake of some social end. It was neither patriotism nor political principle nor even party feeling that inspired the votaries of fashion, but the love of variety and desire for advancement. Those who aspired to become leaders of society must needs be able to attract men who were prominently before the public.

But these were only on the outer edge of the political world. There were others who took politics more seriously. As the circle narrows, the interest deepens. In an age when the newspaper press was as undeveloped as it was in the time of the Georges, when parliamentary reports were written from memory, and the voice was infinitely more powerful and far-reaching than the pen, there was a flavour about political news which we can never taste in the present day, when everything is blazoned abroad from one end of the country to the other an hour after it has occurred. The newspapers, under the weight of the stamp duty, did what they could, but they were, after all, but

meagre sources of information. If the editors had only been awake to the fact, considerable interest might have been added to the columns by the political women who obtained the news first hand, who were constantly conversing with politicians of all degrees, corresponding on topics of all sorts, public and private, with public men, and who were able in some measure to forecast the drift of the political straws floating in their circle. What invaluable hints could have been given by the Countess of Suffolk, who knew all the history of the court, or by the Duchess of Gordon, who was bent at one time on marrying her daughter to Pitt, or by that outspoken Dowager Countess of Stair, who, writing to her son in 1714 about the death of Queen Anne, describes the event as "this surprising show of Providence." Queen Anne, with her High Church principles and dislike of Dissenters, must have been an unwelcome sovereign to a family who had been in the habit of entertaining silenced preachers, and had been persecuted for attending conventicles. "I wish," writes the dowager, "that the nations may live under the due impression of the greatness of their deliverance." Queen Anne's reign was remarkable for the rise of the Dissenters into a political power. They were regarded as a very real danger, and the

strenuousness with which the High Church party inveighed against Baptists, Independents, and Presbyterians—there were no Methodists then—was not so much a measure of their religious feeling as of their political fears. The only Dissenters who stood outside this conflict of parties were the Quakers, who had gone through their days of bitterness, and were now in the position of onlookers. But the rest of the Dissenters formed

"a solid mass of human beings, unconformable to many of the established usages, secular as well as religious. Unbending in principle, and strong enough to resist injustice, no doubt their oppressors found them a grievous clog on the free movements of the complicated machinery of British social and political life." *

The Duchess of Marlborough, perhaps, can hardly be taken as an impartial critic of Queen Anne. Still facts speak for themselves, and there were certain things, such as the details of the management of the royal household, about which the duchess, from her position, knew more than most people. It was she who had fought Queen Anne's battles when William III. grudged his sister-in-law the £30,000 a year which she had been allowed previously by her father, and got the matter brought before Parliament, who proved more liberal

* Burton, "History of Reign of Queen Anne."

than the king. Queen Anne, she said, was never extravagant. On the contrary, she saved, for she

"made no foolish buildings nor bought one jewel. Out of her revenue she gave £100,000 in one year to ease the nation in time of war. Out of her civil list she paid many pensions since thrown on the public."

If Anne showed thrift she certainly did not inherit that virtue from her father's family, and her carefulness of the nation's money was a welcome contrast to the wasteful, shiftless ways of her Stuart progenitors.

The Duchess of Marlborough, whatever aspersions may be cast on her motives and conduct in the unique position which she held, was determined to do all that lay in her power to prevent her successors from tarnishing the family name by becoming tuft-hunters. She left her wealth to her grandson, John Spencer, and his heirs, but it was to be forfeited if they took any employment, military or civil, or any pension from any king or queen.

"This, I think," wrote the Duchess, "ought to please everybody; for it will secure my heirs in being very considerable men. None of them can put on a fool's coat, and take posts from soldiers of experience and service, who never did anything but kill pheasants and partridges. Their heirs may do great service to their country, and ought to be well received when they go to Court, since they will have nothing to ask; for I would have them join with

any king or minister when they desire nothing but what is for the good of the nation and the King, who in truth must always have the same interest. But if we should happen ever to have a Prince that would rump members for giving their vote for the true interest of their country, in that case, a man with a great fortune may be very well contented to live at home, and keep much better company than I have for many years at Court."

The much-envied Duchess had, doubtless, good grounds for her contempt of the society in which she lived. She was constantly surrounded by people who were trying to filch from her the privileges she enjoyed as first favourite. The Duchess of Somerset planned to rob her of the office of Groom of the Stole, a place coveted also by several other noble ladies, such as the Duchess of Ormond, who was a daughter of the Duke of Beaufort, Lady Henry Hyde Rochester, and Lady Fretcheville. To these great ladies politics meant a struggle for place and power. The office of Groom of the Stole belonged originally to the household of the queen, whether a queen-regnant or a queen-consort. It was held by both men and women. Sir Ralph Verney, during the Commonwealth, made application for the post, though the duties must have fallen into abeyance under the Protectorate. But at the accession of George I. it was reserved for an officer of the

household of the King or of the Prince of Wales. The rangership of Windsor Park was another office held by the Duchess of Marlborough.

After the time of the famous Sarah other figures loom upon our view. There is the Countess of Suffolk (already mentioned), known to readers of Swift's correspondence as Mrs. Howard. On her elevation to the rank of countess, in 1731, she became Mistress of the Robes. She had been Lady of the Bedchamber to the Queen before her accession, and had considerable influence at the court of George II., but is said to have been very disinterested in the use of her powers. She was a woman of keen intellect and possessed of many social gifts. She was acquainted with most of the leading men of the day, and her correspondents included William Pitt, Lord Bolingbroke, Lord Chesterfield, Pope, Swift, Gay, Young, and Horace Walpole, her neighbour in later life. Politics naturally entered much into her correspondence. One of her acquaintances, the Countess of Bristol, sends an account of the electioneering contests in which her family were engaged in 1727. She describes the election of an alderman for the town of Bury St. Edmunds, in which Lord Bristol had strong political interest, as a great struggle, the choice of an alderman who should be of their party being of "vast

service towards filling up the body in my lord's interest." Lord Bathurst was another who kept the Countess of Suffolk *au courant* with political news. A very keen politician of this period was Mrs. Selwyn, mother of the well-known George and Charles Selwyn. She is described by Walpole as a woman of great wit and vivacity. She was one of the Ladies of the Bedchamber to the Queen of George II.

Lady Hervey, who as Mary Lepell had been maid of honour to the Princess of Wales, was warmly interested in the politics of her time. In 1743 she writes:—

"The political world seems to be in great agitation. My fears are great. . . . The next session, I believe, will be a warm one."

The following year she observes: "I do not know what party to wish for." In November, 1748, she writes—

"The town is sickly, and nothing seems prosperous but gaming and gamesters. 'Tis really prodigious to see how deep the ladies play."

All her published letters, most of which are addressed to her sons' tutor, the Rev. Edmund Morris, a country clergyman, are full of remarks on public affairs, she herself being in the inner circle

of the political world. One of her four sons, Lord Bristol, was sent as ambassador to Spain in 1758.

Many in the present day will sympathize with the Duchess of Queensberry, who, writing to the Countess of Suffolk from Edinburgh in June, 1734, says—"I am tired to death with politics and elections; they ought in conscience to be but once in an age." Perhaps the Duchess's spleen was induced by her social surroundings, for she adds:—"I have not met with any one in this country who doth not eat with a knife and drink a dish of tea."

Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, is better known as the founder of a religious sect and a disciple of Whitfield than as a politician. But before she became a widow, and while her husband was an active member of the House of Lords, the Countess was an ardent politician. In May, 1738, she made one of a party of ladies, some of them peeresses, who stormed the House of Lords. The public mind was much agitated about some depredations of the Spaniards, and Lady Huntingdon, in common with several of her friends, was exceedingly anxious to hear a certain debate in the House of Lords. But their lordships did not desire to have female or any other auditors.

"At the last warm debate in the House of Lords," says Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "it was unanimously resolved

there should be no unnecessary auditors; consequently, the fair sex were excluded, and the gallery destined to the sole use of the House of Commons. Notwithstanding which determination a tribe of dames resolved to show on this occasion, that neither men nor laws could resist them. These heroines were Lady Huntingdon, the Duchess of Queensberry, the Duchess of Ancaster, Lady Westmoreland, Lady Cobham, Lady Charlotte Edwin, Lady Archibald Hamilton, and her daughter Mrs. Scott, Mrs. Pendarves, and Lady Frances Saunderson."

Lady Mary says she has been particular in enumerating these ladies—

"since I looked upon them to be the boldest assertors and most resigned sufferers for liberty I ever read of. They presented themselves at the door at nine o'clock in the morning, when Sir William Saunderson respectfully informed them that the Chancellor had made an order against their admittance. The Duchess of Queensberry, as head of the squadron, 'pished' at the ill-breeding of a mere lawyer, and desired Sir William to let them upstairs privately. After some modest refusals he swore he would not admit them. Her Grace with a noble warmth answered, they would come in, in spite of the Chancellor and the whole House. This being reported the Peers resolved to starve them out; an order was made that the doors should not be opened till they had raised their siege. These Amazons now showed themselves qualified for the duty of foot-soldiers; they stood there until five in the afternoon, without sustenance, every now and then plying vollies of thumps, kicks and raps, with so much violence against the door that the speakers in the House were scarce

heard. When the Lords were not to be conquered by this, the two Duchesses (very well apprised of the use of stratagems in war) commanded a silence of half an hour; and the Chancellor, who thought this a certain proof of their absence (the Commons also being very impatient to enter), gave orders for the opening of the door, upon which they all rushed in, pushed aside their competitors, and placed themselves in the front rows of the gallery. They stayed there till after eleven, when the House rose; and during the debate, gave applause and showed marks of dislike, not only by smiles and winks (which have always been allowed in these cases), but by noisy laughs and apparent contempts which is supposed to be the true reason why poor Lord Hervey spoke so miserably."

The interest which English ladies took in politics was a matter of considerable surprise to foreigners. It has been related of Lord Tyrconnel, who was Irish by birth but French by education, that when he first visited England, as a man of thirty years of age, he was much disgusted to find politics such a constant theme of conversation. Hoping to get a change, he invited some ladies to supper, but, to his horror, they immediately began to talk about the debates in the House of Commons. Nothing that he could invent in the way of conversation diverted them from the engrossing subject of politics. At last, losing all patience, and forgetting his duties as a host, he absolutely ran away, and the next morning embarked for France.

The whole social atmosphere was charged with the political element. The women sometimes feigned an interest in public affairs which they did not feel because the men would talk of nothing else. The dutiful wife, listening obediently while her husband expounds his views on matters of State, is pictured with admiration by a traveller who made many observations on the manners and customs of the English in the last century.

"Un époux, qui ne respire que politique, est toujours sûr de trouver dans sa femme une personne avec laquelle il peut s'entretenir sur les objets qui l'intéressent le plus vivement. Il n'a pas besoin d'aller hors de chez lui chercher a satisfaire un besoin aussi pressant."

It was a great epoch for women politicians in 1784, when Charles James Fox contested Westminster and outstripped his opponent through the personal influence of the Duchess of Devonshire. The excitement of an election when there was no ballot and the poll was kept open for several weeks can never be equalled in the present day. But the Duchess and her coadjutors pursued methods similar to those of modern canvassers. They drove about in their carriages, creating a constant excitement in favour of Fox and the Liberal party; they went on foot from house to house, arguing, persuading, cajoling the electors out of their votes.

"The Duchess of Devonshire," wrote Lord Cornwallis on April 9th, 1784, "is indefatigable in her canvass for Fox. She was in the most blackguard houses in England by eight o'clock this morning. Fox is, however, 288 behind Sir Cecil Wray, notwithstanding the assistance of the Duchess, Mrs. Bouverie, Mrs. Robinson, and many of her fair canvassers."

Among the numerous poetical effusions was the following ode to the Duchess :—

"Hail, Duchess! first of womankind,
Far, far you leave your sex behind,
With you none can compare ;
For who but you, from street to street,
Would run about a vote to get,
Thrice, thrice bewitching fair!"

The Duchess, with her brilliant beauty and boundless enthusiasm, soon reversed matters, and Fox shot ahead of his opponent with 100 votes. In company with the Duchess on this electioneering campaign was her sister, Lady Duncannon, also a beauty, and among other Whig canvassers were Lady Carlisle, Lady Derby, Lady Beauchamp, and Horace Walpole's three lovely nieces, the Ladies Waldegrave. One of the witticisms of the day aptly described the Duchess of Devonshire and Lady Duncannon "as the most perfect pieces that ever appeared upon a canvass."

An attempt was made by the Tories to secure votes by feminine influence, but though Lady

Salisbury and the Hon. Lady Hobart, who was a connection of William Pitt, did their best, they could not prevail against the queen of beauties and her fair phalanx, whom Pitt ungallantly styled "the other women of the People." It was no use:

"Let Pitt and Wray dislike the fair,
Decry our Devon's matchless merit;
A braver, kinder soul we wear,
And love her *beauty*, love her *spirit*.
Let distant times and ages know,
When Temple would have made us slaves,
'Tis thus we ward the fatal blow,
'Tis Fox that beats—'tis Devon saves."

The Tories tried what they could do by squibs. They issued, among other things, a kind of advertisement, headed:

"NO MURDER!
"NO CLUB LAW, NO BUTCHERS' LAW, NO PETTICOAT GOVERNMENT.

"The worthy electors of Westminster, who are neither intimidated by marrow-bones and cleavers, nor influenced by Peers or Peeresses, are called upon to exert their native privileges as Britons and citizens. It is yet in their power to vindicate their liberties, and by a speedy and earnest support of Lord Hood and Sir Cecil Wray, to pour contempt upon the barest exertion of open bribery that ever disgraced the English nation."

The electors of Westminster, however, echoed the sentiment of the following lines:—

"Sure Heav'n approves of Fox's cause
(Tho' slaves at Court abhor him);
To vote for Fox, then, who can pause,
Since ANGELS canvass for him."

When the election was over, and Fox was being drawn in a triumphal car through the streets, the Duchess of Devonshire and the Duchess of Portland brought up the procession in their state coaches, drawn by six horses each. The same night a well-known society leader, Mrs. Crewe, gave what was then called a rout; and at this brilliant gathering, at which the guests all appeared in the Whig colours, blue and buff, the Prince of Wales gave the toast, "Mrs. Crewe and true blue," to which the hostess promptly responded with, "True blue and all of you."

Among the curiosities of the political literature of that period was a justification of Sir Cecil Wray's proposal to place a tax on female servants:—

"Sir Cecil Wray, at the request of a great part of his constituents, did propose a slender tax upon maid servants. Every man is by nature and humanity bound to protect the sex, but surely no sophistry can be clearer, no absurdity can be greater, than to suppose that a tax of a few shillings per annum on female servants would border the least upon oppression, would be the least calculated to increase prostitution, or to destroy the means of female subsistence. Men who seriously think this (if any such there be) must estimate female virtue at a very low rate,

and be very superficial judges either of the expences or the passions of women. But after all such a tax would in reality fall upon the master or mistress; wages would not be lowered by it, neither would the number of servants be diminished to any degree deserving of attention."

The Westminster election roused women in all parts of the country to take an interest in politics. The Duchess set the fashion for canvassing, and it subsequently became a common thing for ladies to take part in political contests. A curious and disgraceful incident occurred during the general election of 1806. Two ladies, of good social standing, were canvassing very successfully in the Tory interest in some part of Norfolk. Their opponents, rendered desperate by failure, persuaded two women of doubtful character to attire themselves so as to resemble, as nearly as possible, the Tory lady canvassers, and to go about soliciting votes. The trick was soon discovered, and brought a storm upon the head of the Whig candidate.

The great influence which the Duchess of Devonshire was thought to possess may be gathered from a story which was related, many years afterwards, by George IV. A certain Mrs. Adair, a Frenchwoman, who was concerned in political intrigues, called one day upon the Duchess, and offered her £10,000 at once, and

more afterwards, if she would communicate certain Cabinet secrets. The French Government were convinced that the Duchess, being so intimate with the political leaders, was quite able, if she were willing, to impart all the information they desired. The Duchess was very much disturbed, and in indignant distress sent at once for Fox, to tell him of the shameful proposal. Mrs. Adair not only failed in her object, but injured her husband's prospects. Fox had intended to make Mr. Adair his private secretary. After this revelation, he felt he could not do so, and, unwilling to tell Mr. Adair (who seems to have been quite innocent in the matter) that his wife was a spy, he had to put him off with promises.

The Duchess of Devonshire was the last, as she was the most notable, of the female politicians of the eighteenth century—the type of the great lady whose social rank was a measure of her political interest. The immense influence wielded by the Duchess was more due to her personal charms and the energy of her disposition than to her place in society. No successor has dimmed her lustre. She held an unique position. Since her day the Whig party has not been fortunate enough to have in coalition on its behalf a great beauty and a great statesman both of European fame.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BAS-BLEU.

View of literature by the fashionable world—Influence of France—Lady Mary Montagu on women's position—Women afraid of the reputation of learning—The dread of work—Conception of gentility—Mrs. Chapone on women's studies—The literary coterie: Lady Mary Montagu, Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, Elizabeth Carter, Mrs. Vesey, Hannah More, Mrs. Chapone, Miss Talbot—Origin of the term "Bas-bleu"—Miss Carter on the follies of society.

JUST as the revival of learning in the sixteenth century and the patronage of letters at court and among the aristocracy helped to turn the course of women's education into deeper channels, so the great literary movement in the eighteenth century sent out a long wave of thought which left a ripple-mark on the shifting sands of feminine life. The learned ladies of the eighteenth century have acquired historic importance. To say that they reflected the thought of the age would not be correct. The serious cultivation of literature was looked upon by the fashionable world as something

rather beneath them. Even Horace Walpole spoke of literary pursuits as hardly becoming in a gentleman. There was not an intellectual tone anywhere except in professedly literary circles. Men of letters were people to be patronized and made much of as interesting curiosities, but they were not regarded as equals by those with whom they associated. All the professions were held in a kind of contempt by people of leisure. Lady Susan Fox, daughter of Lord Ilchester, married O'Brien the actor, a man of means; and this was thought by her world a far greater *mésalliance* than when Lady Harriet Wentworth married her footman. These two marriages took place in 1764.

The parson fared little better in the estimation of polite society, and the position of a chaplain in a family of rank was that of an upper servant. Learning was all very well for people who made their living by it, but was beneath the attention of persons of quality.

It is somewhat strange that the eighteenth century, which was so much affected by French customs and habits, which delighted—or pretended to delight—in French literature, should not have caught something of the intellectual tone of French society. Mrs. Chapone, whose literary taste and acquirements have rendered her famous, in writing

to her niece on educational matters, says, "I believe there are more agreeable books of female literature in French than in any other language."

It was the age of Addison, Steele, Johnson, Pope, to mention only a few out of a host of celebrated names. The times were bubbling with fresh thought. There had not been a period when there were so many men of letters of diverse order pouring forth their productions since the days of Shakespeare. But with it all there was not that general high appreciation of literature that has become so marked a feature of this century. Outside the literary set the chief things aimed at were accomplishments, and these carried only so far as to serve for conversational and other social purposes. Generally speaking, women's education was very defective.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu writes bitterly of the estimate in which women's intellectual ability was held. Of her studies of the classics, she says:—

"My sex is usually forbid studies of this nature, and folly reckoned so much our proper sphere, we are sooner pardoned any excesses of that than the least pretensions to reading or good sense. We are permitted no books but such as tend to the weakening and effeminating of the mind. Our natural defects are in every way indulged, and it is looked upon as in a degree criminal to improve our reason, or fancy we have any. We are taught to place all

our art in adorning our outward forms, and permitted without reproach to carry that custom even to extravagancy, while our minds are entirely neglected, and by disuse of reflections, filled with nothing but the trifling objects our eyes are daily entertained with. This custom so long established and industriously upheld makes it even ridiculous to go out of the common road, and forces one to find as many excuses as if it was a thing altogether criminal not to play the fool in concert with other women of quality, whose birth and leisure only serve to render them the most useless and most worthless part of the creation. There is hardly a creature in the world more despicable or more liable to universal ridicule than that of a learned woman: these words imply, according to the received sense, a tattling, impertinent, vain and conceited creature. . . . The Abbé Bellegarde gives a right reason for women's talking over much: they know nothing and every outward object strikes their imagination and produces a multitude of thoughts which if they knew more they would know not worth their thinking of. I am not now arguing for an equality of the two sexes. I do not doubt God and nature have thrown us into an inferior rank; we are a lower part of the creation, we owe obedience and submission to the superior sex, and any woman who suffers her vanity and folly to deny this, rebels against the laws of the Creator and indisputable order of nature: but there is a worse effect than this, which follows the careless education given to women of quality, its being so easy for any man of sense, that finds it either his interest or his pleasure to corrupt them. The common method is to begin by attacking their religion: they bring a thousand fallacious arguments their excessive ignorance hinders

them from refuting: and I speak now from my own knowledge and conversation among them, there are more atheists among the fine ladies than the lowest sort of rakes."

The literary women of the eighteenth century belonged to a set apart. Great ladies might do anything, and if they chose to patronize literature, even to become writers themselves, they could do so, and were praised and flattered. It added to the lustre of a hospitable and wealthy house to be the gathering-place of men of letters, and to have for its mistress a lady who could exchange repartees with the wits of the day, and discuss subtle questions with scholars.

Yet even great ladies were afraid sometimes of acknowledging their gifts. Walpole writes, in 1773—

"I made a discovery. . . . Lady Nuneham is a poetess and writes with great ease and sense some poetry, but is as afraid of the character as if it was a sin to make verses."

Women, as a rule, were exceedingly fearful of being thought learned. This was not surprising if, as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu said, the generality of men regarded a learned education for daughters "as great a profanation as the clergy would do if the laity should presume to exercise the functions of the priesthood." Even so enlightened a man as Dr. More was alarmed at his clever daughter's

progress, and when he found his little Hannah making rapid headway in Latin and mathematics he caused her to discontinue those studies lest she should appear singular.

For women of inferior social rank there was no inducement, in the tone of thought around them, to tread the paths of learning. Their education was on a low level. A woman's part was to be negative to a great extent, not to embarrass men by displaying talent and learning, nor to worry them with theories and opinions, but to accept whatever was laid down. Especially was this the case in the middle ranks of society. Work was shunned by gentlewomen, and those who were obliged to earn their own living were objects of pity to their friends. Gentility consisted in doing nothing. This sentiment prevailed in the first half of this century. It was rife in Miss Austen's days. In her novel "Emma," there is a certain "Jane Fairfax," who, not being very well provided for, educates herself for teaching. Her prospects as a governess are regarded by her circle with the utmost horror, and her preparation is described as that of a martyr.

"With the fortitude of a devoted novitiate she had resolved at one and twenty to complete the sacrifice, and retire from all the pleasures of life, of rational intercourse, equal society, peace and hope, to penance and mortification for ever."

The intellectual evolution of woman was inevitably slow in such a mental atmosphere. It needed an awakening of thought in all departments of life to raise the educational standard. Until the false notions respecting work were broken in upon, there could be no advance. There was no motive for cultivating knowledge so long as its fruits were held in such low esteem.

The description in "Tom Jones" of Sophia Western's aunt, although touched with satire, gives some indication of the standard of female accomplishments :—

"She had lived about the Court and had seen the world; hence she had acquired all that knowledge which the said world usually communicates, and was a perfect mistress of manners, customs, ceremonies and fashions. Nor did her erudition stop here: she had considerably improved her mind by study; she had not only read all the modern plays, operas, oratorios, poems, and romances, in all which she was a critic; but had gone through Rapin's History of England, Echard's Roman History, and many French *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire:* to these she had added most of the political pamphlets and journals published within the last twenty years; from which she had attained a very competent skill in politics, and could discourse very learnedly on the affairs of Europe."

Even Mrs. Chapone deprecates the study of the classics by women. She writes :—

"As to the learned languages, though I respect the abilities and application of those ladies who have attained them, and who make a modest and proper use of them, yet I would by no means advise you or any other woman who is not strongly influenced by a particular genius—to engage in such studies. The labour and time which they require are generally incompatible with our natures and proper employments: the real knowledge which they supply is not essential, since the English, French and Italian tongues afford tolerable translations of all the most valuable productions of antiquity, beside the multitude of original authors which they furnish; and these are much more than sufficient to store your mind with as many ideas as you will know how to manage. The danger of pedantry and presumption in a woman—of her exciting envy in one sex and jealousy in the other—of her exchanging the graces of imagination for the severity and preciseness of a scholar, would be, I vow, sufficient to frighten me from the ambition of seeing my girl remarkable for learning. Such objections are perhaps still stronger with regard to the abstruse sciences."

The learned ladies called *bas-bleus* were all exceptionally gifted women, and the fact that they acquired such celebrity is an indication that their intellectual interests were something out of the common.

The name that rises most readily is that of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu—already quoted from—who was singularly unfortunate in her literary acquaintance. The long friendship with Pope ended disastrously, and Walpole, who knew all the

celebrities of his day, always mentions her with opprobrium. Walpole was not sparing of his animosity when offended, and Lady Mary, apart from her literary proclivities, was displeasing to him, her husband having been an opponent of Walpole's father. She was a good classical scholar, studying under Bishop Burnet, and was abreast of all the thought of the time. We find her, when scarcely twenty, corresponding with her tutor about a translation that she had made of the "Enchiridion" of Epictetus. This was a mere fragment of work done in a week's leisure before starting on a journey abroad. Many years later Elizabeth Carter betook herself to the study of the same classic, and won a great deal of fame among students for her scholarly translation.

If for nothing else, Lady Mary would deserve to be remembered for the liberality of view which caused her to fly in the face of prejudice and opposition, and experiment on her son with the then unknown system of inoculation for small-pox. The secret she learned abroad, and her example was the means of the system being introduced into England, to the great relief of an age scarred with the ravages of small-pox, and almost equally ignorant of the principles of sanitation as of the practice of vaccination.

After Lady Mary's time there arose another Montagu, less noted, but equally brilliant and versatile. This was Elizabeth Robinson, wife of Edward Montagu, who was grandson of the first Earl of Sandwich, and M.P. for Huntingdon. She was brought up in the country, first in Yorkshire, next at Cambridge, and then, until her marriage, in Kent, at Monks Horton, near Hythe, which was the postal town to which the letters had to be carried. Her insatiable love of society would have made provincial life as irksome to her as it was to her father (who frequently bemoaned the necessity of residing away from the diversions of the town), had it not been for her elastic spirits and sparkling wit, which always found food for mirth in the dullest company. In the midst of her lively chatter —and no correspondent was ever more delightfully fresh and witty in dealing with the commonplaces of life—she discusses Dr. Middleton's "Life of Cicero," and Lyttelton's "Observations on Cicero" with her friend, the Duchess of Portland, who was a great student of the famous Roman.

While the family were living at Cambridge she had the advantage of associating with many of the heads of the University, and Dr. Middleton, a family connection, took the bright, intelligent child, as she was then, under his special care. Her

father's influence ought not to be left out of account, he being a man of considerable intellectual power, and ready to forward his daughter's studies and encourage her talents in every way. She was more fortunate in this respect than her celebrated namesake. Poor Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had to teach herself Latin and everything else that was out of the usual course, her sole instructress being a pious, elderly governess, not qualified for the task of instructing a girl of such brilliant parts as the daughter of Evelyn Pierrepont, Marquis of Dorchester and Duke of Kingston.

To another favoured correspondent, the Rev. Mr. Freind, we find Mrs. Montagu descanting on the qualities of Warburton's "Notes on Shakespeare" in a very critical spirit. She finds some new "Life of James I." which appeared about that time very dull, and English history after his day "very disagreeable."

"In some reigns the kingdom is in the most terrible confusion, in others it appears mean and corrupt; in King Charles II.'s time what a figure we make with French measures and French mistresses. But when our times are written, England will recover its glory; such conquests abroad, such prosperity at home, such prudence in council, such vigour in execution, so many men clothed in scarlet, so many fine tents, so many cannon that do not so much as roar, such easy taxes, such flourishing trade! Can

posterity believe it? I wish our history, from its incredibility, may not get bound with the fairy tales, and serve to amuse children, and make nursery maids moralize."

Whether she is writing of balls or of books, of flirtations or of syllogisms, her comments have always the same humorous touch. Like most of the fashionable women of her day, she had recourse to Bath to drink the waters. There was no false pretence of ill-health in her case. Her delicate constitution was a life-long trouble. In 1748, six years after her marriage, she was sent for three months to Bath, where, she writes, "they were too dull to furnish any news or scandal." Eight years before she wrote of Bath:—

"I think no place can be less agreeable; 'how d' ye do,' is all one hears in the morning, and 'what is trumps' in the afternoon."

Mrs. Montagu and Elizabeth Carter were the closest of friends and most constant correspondents. Mrs. Montagu's regard for Miss Carter was so sincere that when Mr. Montagu died, in 1775, leaving his widow a large fortune, the first thing she did was to settle a hundred a year on Miss Carter. Mrs. Montagu was the most brilliant by far of her *côterie*, and her assemblies in Hill Street and Portman Square became noted. She was an excellent

conversationalist, a beauty, and a wit. Miss Carter, suffering as she did a good deal from ill-health, was much more wrapped up in her studies. At no time in her life, probably, could she have said, like her friend, Elizabeth Robinson: "The very name of assembly has its charms for me," though she speaks, in her young days, of sitting up till three a.m., and dancing nine hours.

Miss Carter's letters are full of interesting references to literature, politics, the events of the day, the changes in her own social circle. She is always genial, and passes easily from subject to subject in the manner of one accustomed to take a large view of things. Her reading was extensive, ranging from the classics to "Captain Cook's Voyages" and the works of Mme. de Genlis. For modern novels she seems to have availed herself, like ladies of the present day, of the subscription libraries. Writing in 1782 from Deal, where her father was a minister, to Mrs. Montagu, she says: "I have not seen Miss Burney's 'Cecilia.' It has not yet travelled to our circulating library." With French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, she was well acquainted, also with German, an uncommon acquirement in those days, and one which the brilliant Mrs. Montagu did not seem to possess, for Miss Carter, in describing a heavy German novel, remarks:

"I have not heard that it has been translated into French, or I should much like you to read it." Writing of German novels, she says—

"Some of the German books of fiction are exquisitely well written; but I should think them very dangerous reading for young people, from a singular art which they have of sanctifying the passions."

With sentimentality Miss Carter had no sympathy, and finds "The Sorrows of Werther" "a detestable book." She adds, "but I know of no other in German that is exceptionable in the same horrid way."

The Johnson, Thrale, and Burney set may be said to have formed a part of this literary *côterie.* Indeed, with Dr. Johnson's death the fame of Mrs. Montagu's *salon* fell. Out of deference to the doctor, the company was carefully sorted, and no freethinkers, however distinguished, were invited to join the circle. Johnson used to say of a celebrated scholar of his acquaintance that he understood Greek better than any one whom he had ever known *except* Elizabeth Carter. Mrs. Vesey, another of the *côterie,* held assemblies, the character of which Hannah More described in her poem on "The Progress of Conversation," addressed to Mrs. Vesey, and which Miss Carter thought a delightful production.

Mrs. Vesey's assembly was nick-named *bas-bleu.*

Opinions differ as to the exact origin of the name. One account says that a foreign gentleman, being invited to go to one of the parties—either Mrs. Montagu's or Mrs. Vesey's—with an acquaintance, was told he might go in his blue stockings if he pleased, full dress being quite optional. In fact, ceremony and entertainment other than that of conversation were dispensed with entirely. Other writers say that it was Mr. Benjamin Stillingfleet, the naturalist, who gave rise to the appellation by wearing blue stockings, but according to the Rev. Montagu Pennington (Miss Carter's biographer), Stillingfleet died in 1771, before the name came into vogue. "To these parties," says the same authority, "it was not difficult for any person of character to be introduced." Hannah More writes—

"Here sober Duchesses are seen,
Chaste wits and critics void of spleen:
Physicians fraught with real science,
And Whigs and Tories in alliance;
Poets fulfilling Christian duties,
Just Lawyers, reasonable Beauties;
Bishops who preach and Peers who pray,
And Countesses who seldom play,
Learn'd Antiquaries who from college,
Reject the rust and bring the knowledge;
And hear it, *age*, believe it, *youth*,—
Polemics really seeking truth;
And Travellers of that rare tribe
Who've *seen* the countries they describe."

No wonder that these parties were attractive. Mrs. Vesey was an admirable hostess, and had the gift of making every one appear at his or her best. Conversation under her guidance flowed easily, and she had a clever way of sorting her guests into little groups.

"While perhaps Dr. Johnson in one corner held forth on the moral duties, in another two or three young people might be talking of the fashions and the Opera, and in a third Lord Orford (then Mr. Horace Walpole) might be amusing a little group around him with his lively wit and intelligent conversation."

Mrs. Vesey was the daughter of Sir Thomas Vesey, Archbishop of Tuam, and after the death of her first husband, Mr. Wm. Handcock, she again took her maiden name by marrying a relative, Mr. A. Vesey, of Lucan, near Dublin, Comptroller and Accountant-General for Ireland. Mrs. Vesey's brilliant faculties were clouded over for about two years before her death, which took place when she was seventy-five. She seems to have had some premonition that her bodily powers would last longer than her mental ones. Elizabeth Carter remained a faithful friend to the last, and went regularly to see her when in London after Mrs. Vesey had ceased to recognize any of her acquaintances.

Among the company which used to frequent Mrs. Vesey's were Burke, Johnson, Pulteney, Garrick, Lord Lyttleton, Dr. Burney, and that eccentric character, Lord Monboddo. Mrs. Montagu, of course, was of the party, and Hannah More when she was in town. There was no card-playing in such assemblies. People really met together to enjoy each other's conversation. This was quite a new departure in London society.

> "Long was Society o'er-run
> By Whist, that desolating Hun;
> Long did Quadrille despotic sit,
> That vandal of colloquial wit;
> And Conversation's setting light
> Lay half obscured in Gothic night;
> At length the mental shades decline,
> Colloquial wit begins to shine;
> Genius prevails and Conversation
> Emerges into *Reformation*."

One feature of this literary society was that the ladies of it were by no means wholly given up to literary pursuits. They lived in the world and enjoyed it, though they chose their own way of doing so, and selected their company more with regard to similarity of tastes than rank or wealth. There was, doubtless, a certain amount of "intellectual trifling" among these lively wits, as one writer has observed.* Mrs. Chapone, who is said to have been hampered by an unpleasing

* Anna J. Buckland, "Life of Hannah More."

appearance, would probably not have won her way in society but for her intellectual gifts, but the same cannot be said of Elizabeth Montagu, whose charming face and manners made her a general favourite.

The real friendship which existed between Mrs. Montagu, Miss Carter, Mrs. Chapone, Miss Talbot, Mrs. Vesey, and one or two more, and the unaffected interest they displayed in each other's welfare, redeemed their correspondence from any charge of pedantry. Miss Carter discourses impartially of family matters and of Epictetus, of her friend Miss Talbot's health, her brother's marriage, of Dr. Lyttelton's new history, and of French literature. She was the deepest student of all the set, and after her juvenile days avoided society more than did the others, though to please her brother she would sometimes go to a ball, "where," she writes, "I have nothing to do, and to which I have no earthly temptation." She would court headache and subsequent prostration by fulfilling social claims for which her weak health was not fitted. In spite of rheumatism, which sometimes crippled her from head to foot, and other ailments, she lived to the age of eighty-nine.

Miss Carter could be severe on the follies of society in her good-natured way. Writing to

Mrs. Vesey in April, 1772, she tells her that the macaronies are wearing artificial nosegays.

"Surely this species of animal is not an English character. Such a composition of monkey and demon, as at one half of the day appears to be studying all the tricks of the most trifling and contemptible foppery, and in the other is roaring and blaspheming at a gaming table, must be an aggregate of all the follies and all the crimes that a worthless head and a profligate heart can collect from all parts of the globe. Next winter may, perhaps, furnish a companion to the picture and exhibit the *côterie* ladies making riots at the play-houses armed with oaken clubs, knocking down watchmen and demolishing lamps—and fainting away at the sight of a spider or an earwig."

CHAPTER V.

THE PHILANTHROPISTS.

The beginnings of organized philanthropy—Hannah More and her sisters—Mary Carpenter—Mrs. Trimmer—Elizabeth Fry—Harriet Martineau—Miss Florence Nightingale—Mrs. Josephine Butler.

THERE was no organized philanthropy before the time of Hannah More, who, with her sisters, undertook the task of introducing much-needed reforms in the neighbourhood of Bristol, where she lived. At that time it was quite an unknown thing for ladies to visit the haunts of vice and the dens where the poor were huddled together. Hannah More's purpose was a religious one, the earlier philanthropists were women in whom the religious impulse was predominant. It was much more a religious than a humanitarian work in which they engaged. Hannah More, Elizabeth Fry, Mary Carpenter were all women of strong religious feeling, and all their efforts were inspired by a sense of the necessity they were under for saving souls.

The modern philanthropists work from another standpoint. Their object is, briefly, civilization and happiness. They go in the name of humanity rather than that of religion. They endeavour first to secure better recognition of the laws which bind society together—respect for morality, abstinence from crime, order, cleanliness, sobriety. They do not appeal to the emotions, but to the reason. The inculcation of religious belief they leave to accredited teachers. How far they themselves are moved by religious impulse it is not for the outside public to judge. But from whatever source their stream of action takes its rise, it runs into distinctly secular channels. The comparative dissociation of philanthropy from religion—for it is only partially separated—is due very much to the tendency in the present day to subdivide work, to classify and specialize. We have experts for everything.

In the last century the philanthropists were all religious workers. While Hannah More was working in the West of England, a lady who became one of her friends and correspondents was engaged in a somewhat similar enterprise at Brentford. But Mrs. Sarah Trimmer had none of the difficulties to contend with that beset Hannah More and her sisters at Cheddar and Blagdon. She was not working among a ferocious, half savage population. Mrs.

Trimmer, like the Misses More, was of a deeply religious nature, and her first effort was to establish Sunday-schools at Brentford for the children of the very poor. It was the girls who received her special care, two schools being eventually established there for girls, and one for boys. The destitute condition of the children who were gathered together turned the scheme more into a charity school. Poor people in those days would buy rags by the pound with which to cover—one cannot say clothe—their children. So frocks and jackets had to be provided, and, not satisfied with religious instruction, Mrs. Trimmer began to seek for some daily employment for the little ones. An opportune present of a spinning-wheel of peculiar construction, which enabled thirteen girls to be set to work, was the beginning of a school of industry. To flax-spinning was added knitting, but neither of these occupations proved profitable, and plain work was substituted, this being much more successful. One of Mrs. Trimmer's friends and helpers was a Mrs. Denward, whose acquaintance she made through Miss Elizabeth Carter. Similar schools were established here and there by benevolent persons in different places; there was one in the Edgeware Road, London, and one at Hartingford, in Hertfordshire—both due to feminine energy. There were also one or two female friendly

societies established during the closing years of the century, and in 1799 several ladies and gentlemen at Clapham banded together to visit the poor in a systematic way, dividing the neighbourhood into districts. Mrs. Trimmer was not only a philanthropist, but, like Hannah More, possessed of literary ability, though in a much slighter degree. In her girlhood she had attracted the notice of Dr. Johnson by her intellectual tendencies, and she had a considerable gift for composition. How she found time for outside work with her family of twelve children it is difficult to see, but as she married at twenty-one, some of her daughters were old enough to assist her in her projects, which did not take shape for twenty-five years after her marriage.

In Hannah More's philanthropy is seen very distinctly the combination of religious and secular work. The people among whom she laboured were destitute of everything. To visit them at all required considerable courage. Among the Mendip Hills lived a wild population, lawless, untamed, uncivilized. Compared with these savages the rough colliers and weavers of the villages were a mild and tractable set. Hannah More saw that the only hope of improvement was to work among the children. She began by establishing schools.

It was more like reformatory work. Many of the children had been in prison, and were as vicious for their years as the parents. Sometimes there was opposition from rich neighbours, as at Wedmore, a village near Cheddar, where the principal landlord of the place objected to a school being built. In another district, Blagdon, a long and serious struggle took place through the action of the curate, who was offended with the schoolmaster appointed by the Misses More. But the work gradually extended, until an area of twenty-eight miles was covered. To the Sunday-schools were added day-schools, the girls being taught to spin flax and wool, and the products of their industry were sent to factories in Somersetshire and Gloucestershire. Miss Yonge, in her "Life of Hannah More," observes that for thirty years Hannah and Patty More were like two colonial clergymen, with their large area of work, which obliged them to keep travelling from place to place. And the difficulties which they encountered were more like those of settlers in a new country than of philanthropic workers in Old England. To take only one instance: there was no literature in those days suitable for use among the poor. Philanthropists of the present day have ready to hand quantities of leaflets, tracts, and books, specially

composed for the unlearned; for juveniles there is a storehouse of fiction. But Hannah More had to write her own tales. And when it came to teaching, there were no cheap school-primers, no well-arranged spelling and reading books. National education had not begun. The means of instruction and amusement had all to be created.

It was the lack of religious teaching that first incited Hannah More to her work. In one place there had been no resident vicar for a hundred years. The Church, far from initiating any scheme of social reform, did not even fulfil its special functions. The story of Mr. Wilberforce's excursion to Cheddar while on a visit to the Misses More, and his brief comment, "Something must be done for Cheddar," has been often told. That was the beginning of Hannah More's life-work. Although her writing engaged so large a part of her time, and brought her fame and wealth, and the homage of the best society, it was the philanthropist which inspired the woman of letters. Hannah More's life was a very long one, and forms a link with the nineteenth century, for while she belonged essentially to the age of Dr. Johnson, with whom she was on intimate terms, she was also the contemporary of Miss Mitford (who, it may be remarked in passing, thoroughly disliked her), of

Mary Carpenter, Mrs. Somerville, Maria Edgeworth, and some others known to persons still living.

It is curious that two such noted philanthropists as Hannah More and Mary Carpenter should have both lived and worked in the neighbourhood of Bristol in close succession. Indeed before Hannah More's eighty-eight years had been spent, Mary Carpenter had become an active worker. In 1831, two years before Hannah More's death, Mary Carpenter was acting as superintendent of the afternoon Sunday-school. She was then twenty-four years of age, and overflowing with mental activity. In Mary Carpenter's days, as in Hannah More's, there was no organized system of district visiting in connection with churches and chapels. Dr. Carpenter, Mary's father, was a Nonconformist minister, and a society was formed for visiting the poor belonging to his congregation and Sunday-school. But in 1839 Dr. Carpenter died, and his daughter's work and interests widened more and more, becoming less local and more general. Still the neighbourhood of her own home was the first to engage her sympathies, and continued to hold them to the end. It was around Bristol that the most important of the movements which she originated took shape—the Ragged Schools, the first of which was opened in 1846. From the waifs

and strays gathered in these schools Mary Carpenter turned her attention to a still more difficult class, for whom there was no provision at that time. She was one of those whose minds stretch out to the future, and her anxiety was aroused at the prospect of letting loose upon society the juvenile delinquents, with whose ways she had become only too well acquainted. It shocked her to see boys and girls brought up before the magistrates time after time, and allowed to return to their old haunts and their vicious companions without any effort at reclaiming them. In the year 1851 she wrote a work on the subject of Reformatory Schools, and the following year got a school established at Kingswood, near Bristol. At the same time Mr. Adderley, who was one of her warmest friends, introduced a Bill into Parliament on the subject, which continued to be agitated. In 1852 Mary Carpenter writes to Lady Byron, with whom she was on cordial terms of intimacy, hoping that after the Conferences which had been held at Birmingham a ladies' committee would be formed, and a girls' reformatory school started. In 1854 "The Red Lodge" School for Girls was opened at Bristol.

How Mary Carpenter came to be recognized as the pioneer in this important work may be seen

from tributes paid to her initiatory efforts about a quarter of a century later by Mr. G. W. Hastings, President of the Council of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, and by Lord Sandon. Mr. Hastings said, in 1877—

"I remember well, when some twenty-five years ago, she [Mary Carpenter] mainly originated the movement for dealing effectually with the criminal and vagrant classes. . . . What was most remarkable in Mary Carpenter was the prevision which she showed on the whole subject. . . . I had the honour of acting as Chairman of the Committee which assisted Miss Carpenter in obtaining the insertion in Lord Sandon's Bill of a series of clauses providing for such schools."

In July, 1876, Lord Sandon remarked—

"He did not wish to take to himself or the Government, the credit of the scheme itself. The real credit of it belonged to many benevolent people outside the House, and amongst them he must mention the honoured name of Miss Carpenter, who had tried Day Industrial Schools under disadvantageous circumstances and with marked success."

Meantime Mary Carpenter's sympathies had been going out to the Americans in their struggle for the abolition of slavery, while the movement at home concerning education also engaged her attention. In the year 1856 Sir John Pakington brought forward a measure in the House of

Commons for creating Education Boards in every town and country union to levy a rate for the education of the people. Such a proposal was far too radical to find acceptance and had to be withdrawn. Then Lord John Russell urged that Parliament ought to aim at establishing a system of national education. To this Mary Carpenter took exception, and in correspondence with Sir Stafford Northcote expressed herself strongly against Lord John's scheme. Her idea was that evening schools would meet the want. In the next two or three years she was much occupied with the subject of Industrial, Ragged, and Reformatory schools, and wrote a pamphlet urging the claims of Ragged Schools to a share in the Parliamentary grant. In 1862 she writes that her mind is occupied with the convict question, "which is of surpassing importance."

Another subject was, however, to take precedence of the convict question. Hitherto Mary Carpenter had confined her energies to the reclamation of the lowest *stratum* of society from its vice and ignorance. Now she was to find another class altogether, in equal need of her help, a class which is engaging the earnest attention of modern philanthropists—the women of India. In January, 1864, she writes :—

"I here record my solemn resolve that henceforth I devote my heart and soul and strength to the elevation of the women of India. In doing this I shall not suddenly abandon my work here which has long and deep claims on me, nor will I give it up until I have put it so far as in me lies on a firm and settled basis. I believe that it is come to a point at which this can be done. But I shall obey the remarkable call which has been given me so unexpectedly, which is in accordance with former deep feelings and resolves. Without any present and apparent change of plan, I shall watch openings, devote myself to perfecting my present work, and bearing testimony in my purposed book, gain information and prepare in every way for my great object, going to India to promote the Christian work for the women."

When Mary Carpenter said "Christian work," she did not mean only what is technically known as religious work. The subjects that engaged her attention in India were educational and prison reform. To procure female teachers in the schools and female warders in the gaols seemed to her the greatest necessities for the well-being of the women of India. Above all did she strive to get women teachers, and after visiting Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, a committee was formed to carry on the plan she had outlined.

At the present day the question of women's position in India is very much debated, some contending that women are not either degraded or

ill-treated, and by no means the miserable slaves whom we picture to ourselves as groaning under a system of bondage and oppression. Others again urge that the Zenana is an institution fraught with permanent evils, and that child-marriage, which results in the creation of so large a number of widows, who are treated as a class apart, is a hideous social deformity. Women in England have entered with great enthusiasm upon the crusade in defence of the women of India. It has diverted a considerable stream of philanthropy that would otherwise have flowed into home channels. During the last twenty-five years especially India has been a rallying point of certain movements. The medical women have turned their eyes eastward. The missionaries are more numerous than ever; and the educationists are setting up schools, training native teachers, and encouraging the efforts made by some Hindu ladies in this country who are working for their sisters in India.

The work which Mary Carpenter began has been followed up as far as concerns education in a way that shows signs of permanent activity. She paid three visits to India, keeping hold of the threads of her home interests meanwhile.

It will be noted that the earlier philanthropists undertook exceedingly hard problems, and at a

period when unusual difficulties beset women who engaged in work outside the home. It is very much easier now for women to enter upon any kind of work, paid or unpaid, secular or religious, either as volunteers or as bread-winners. Public opinion is to a large extent with them in their efforts; formerly it was against them; they have become what they were not a century ago—an essential portion of the body politic, they are included among those who have a practical interest in the welfare of the State. When Elizabeth Fry penetrated to the female wards of Newgate, gentlewomen were not accustomed to visiting among the slums of London as they are now. They knew nothing whatever of the insides of workhouses, and to go among convicted criminals must have seemed an awful and impossible task. Elizabeth Fry was not the centre of a humanitarian or religious movement. She struck out a new path. The contrast between her girlhood and her womanhood was very marked. As Elizabeth Gurney she revelled in all the pleasures of society which the position of her parents afforded. Norwich was her early home, but she married at twenty, and lived the greater part of her life in London. Like many another enthusiast or saint, she was overpowered by a sense of the claims of her spiritual nature, but her piety took

practical shape. She did not dwell in solitude engaged in the culture of her own soul, but was driven forth by a mighty impulse to devote herself to the lowest and most miserable of those of her sex. It is perfectly clear that it was the force of religious feeling that stirred Elizabeth Fry to her life-work. There was no reform in the air; she did not come into the midst of a general movement. At the present day she might have been the head of a sisterhood, a round-the-world missionary, a hospital nurse, a Salvationist leader, or the founder of a reformatory. But in her own day she stood alone; she had no extraneous support. Everything was against her. The very governor of Newgate tried to dissuade her from her enterprise. But nothing could deter her, not the dread of personal danger, robbery, insult, or the still more crushing fear of failure. And she succeeded marvellously. The change effected by her presence and by her suggestions (which included a school) quite transformed the prison, which became in eighteen months' time a place to which visitors flocked.

The philanthropists of the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, had two great obstacles to contend with—an apathetic public and an apathetic Church. When Mrs. Fry began her labours in London the humanitarian spirit

was not awake. Here and there individuals were found performing deeds of benevolence, but it was not an age of association and combination. When Hannah More and her sisters went over to Cheddar, they found the people absolutely deserted by those who should have been their spiritual guides. These courageous women were led to their work by the negligence of the Church.

Mary Carpenter brings us into the modern period, the period of conferences, discussions, correspondence, and parliamentary agitation about domestic politics. But when she opened her first Ragged School in 1846, and when she wrote her book on Reformatory Schools in 1851, philanthropic work was not organized as it is now. Like Hannah More and Elizabeth Fry, she launched into questions of great magnitude. To rescue and train juvenile delinquents in England, and to cope with the subject of women's education in India, were Herculean tasks. Later on, in the seventies, Mary Carpenter was associated with Mrs. Josephine Butler, Miss Florence Nightingale, and Harriet Martineau in questions of moral reform, and she signed an appeal for the formation of the Ladies' National Association for the repeal of certain Acts which Mary Carpenter and her friends justly regarded as an insult to womanhood. In the year of her death,

1877, she put her signature to another document—a memorial to the senate of the University of London for the admission of women to medical degrees—an object which has since been attained.

The philanthropy of the last century was really a matter of individual enterprise. There being no systems of work established, every step was an experiment. The interest centres round a few persons, and the history of their labours is the history of the whole philanthropic movement. The record is therefore practically limited to personal narrative.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CHAPTER VI.

SERMONS IN DRAWING-ROOMS.

Formalism and inertness of the Church—Societies for the advancement of religion confined to men—Movements outside the Church—The Countess of Huntingdon and Whitfield—Great Ladies' opinions of the Methodist preachers—Attitude of the upper classes towards religious movements—Condition of the Clergy.

THE characteristic most generally dwelt upon of the Church in the eighteenth century is its formalism. The records of philanthropy show how very much the Church was outside the lives of the people. A great deal has been written about the want of religious life and feeling among the clergy of the last century.

"The eighteenth century was the golden age of the Establishment, an age of brass, or rather of iron, for the Church. Everything resembling vital godliness was under a ban at the very time when mobs gathered to resist any concession to Nonconformity, and the cry of the 'Church in danger' was enough to overturn a Ministry, and set the nation in a blaze."

"Everywhere there was a lack of spiritual life. The age hated enthusiasm, and the effect of its chilling cynicism was felt by the Churches."

No one can define how much earnestness and conviction actually existed. We are accustomed to look for modes of expression which are peculiar to the present day, and, failing to find them, to assume that nothing lay beneath the apparently cold exterior. It may have been that the clergy were indifferent, but in any case they would not have acted according to the approved modern methods. The Church, it is true, did not organize social work of any description; the clergy were many of them pluralists, and there was very little attempt made to attract the masses by going out of the usual routine. In the last century, the idea that the Church was an organization for the performance of a variety of everyday matters had not taken root. The Church, in fact, had not been secularized. The most conscientious of her priests did not conceive it to be part of their duties to establish clothing-clubs or reading-rooms, to keep a brigade of district visitors, and to start temperance crusades. All these things are of modern growth.

While the Church as a social force showed so little activity, it was inert also as a spiritual agency, according to modern standards. The spirit of religious propagandism was not abroad. Outside

the routine of public worship the clergy did not feel called upon to stray. There are always periods in the history of institutions when vitality seems at a low ebb. It was so in the eighteenth century with regard to the Church.

"It is hard indeed," wrote the late Professor Thorold Rogers, "to see what there is to relieve the darkness of the picture which the Anglican Church presents from the death of Queen Anne to the time of the Evangelical Revival. No doubt it is conceivable that things might have been worse. The clergy might have scandalised their profession by evil lives. This cannot be laid to their charge. Though negligent of duty, and, to a large extent, unfaithful to the Gospel which they were bound to preach, lacking not only in fervour but also in faith, and eager only in the pursuit of selfish ends, they were not profligate or immoral. . . . The Church had become simply a department of the State, and a department whose officers were, even in those days of general corruption and abuse, conspicuous examples of inattention to duty."

The events that occurred after the dissolution of the monasteries, the conflict between the two religious parties, the persecutions and martyrdoms on both sides, were a tragic preparation for the political struggle of the seventeenth century, in which the religious element played a great part. Between the Puritans and the royalist Anglicans was an antagonism similar to that which existed

between Protestants and Roman Catholics in the preceding era. The differences in the form of their religion were greater, and the feeling between the two parties was equally bitter, if not so terrific in its modes of expression. That to this hot fanaticism should succeed a period of formalism was only a natural reaction. The eighteenth century may be excused if it found its emotions exhausted.

"The mainspring of the religious as well as of the political life of the country was relaxed. In both one and the other the high feeling of faith was enervated; and this deficiency was sensibly felt in a lowering of general tone, both in the domain of intellect and in that of practice." *

The Protestant Church during the first century or century and a half after the Reformation did not concern itself with matters outside strictly religious teaching. It neither asked nor desired the help of the laity.

"A clerical jealousy of laymen, a fear of schism, and a dislike of everything approaching to irregularity, lay at the bottom of the Anglican aversion to lay agency. Prejudices of a similar kind influenced Puritans; for although there existed abundant religious irregularity during the Commonwealth, there were not a few amongst Nonconformists wedded to their own notions of Church order. They were High Churchmen in their own way, regarding the ecclesiastical principles of the New Testament as so

* Overton.

comprehensive in their direct application as to render all associations distinguished from the Church itself as perfectly needless. This state of things prevailed during three-fourths of the seventeenth century, when a movement began, opening the way to consequences which ever since have been unfolding themselves. At present the vast number of our religious societies, some in slender connection with churches, some in no connection with them at all, form phenomena worth the study of social philosophers; and the rise of them may be distinctly traced in these combinations, for certain purposes, just before and during the reign of William III." *

But in these societies for the advancement of religion, which were started in 1687, women did not take any part. They were founded by young men, members of the Church of England, living in London, and their design is stated to have been "mutual assistance and consolation one of another in their Christian warfare." They went on to try and improve the evil habits which they saw around them, and presently others began to stir also. Four or five private gentlemen banded together to battle with the drunkenness, swearing, and other vices of London life. They must have been stout-hearted reformers to enter upon so unequal a contest. But their example inspired men elsewhere, and there gradually sprang up Societies for

* "Religion in England."

the Reformation of Manners in all parts of the kingdom. These societies were the first stirrings of the spirit of reform which has created so many channels of activity in later times. The work which they did—the prosecution of persons who kept disorderly houses, procuring at considerable pains warrants against housebreakers and other offenders—was not work in which women could share, at least in that period. And although it was done under the impulse of religion, and in some cases with the co-operation of the clergy, it was not initiated by the Church, but by laymen.

The first women's movements in religious matters were outside the Church. The preaching of Whitfield attracted the Countess of Huntingdon, whose drawing-rooms were filled by fashionable crowds curious to hear the new Methodist preacher. Other women of rank joined the Countess. Even the famous Duchess of Marlborough was drawn into this movement so alien to her surroundings. She expresses regret on one occasion that she had not been present at a certain sermon of Whitfield's in St. Sepulchre's Church. But among the Countess's friends there were some who strongly resented the plain-spoken words and uncompromising doctrines of the great revivalists. The Duchess of Buckingham writes :—

"I thank your Ladyship for the information concerning the Methodist preachers; their doctrines are most repulsive, and strongly tinctured with impertinence and disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually endeavouring to level all ranks, and do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting, and I cannot but wonder that your Ladyship should relish any sentiments so much at variance with high rank and good breeding."

The Countess of Suffolk was more demonstrative still in her expressions of dislike, and is said on one occasion to have rushed out of the Countess's drawing-room in a passion after a sermon from Whitfield, which she construed into a personal attack.

Generally speaking, the attitude of the upper classes towards reform, whether religious or otherwise, was one of indifference or of hostility.

The condition of the clergy themselves was not favourable to the growth of new efforts. Such marked inequalities as existed in the eighteenth century created too much friction within the ranks to leave room for a healthy, expanding life. Again and again rises the cry of the poorly paid, unconsidered priest against the—

"mighty Rectors riding over the heads of their Readers and Curates, receiving them with an air of superiority

that would better become a Persian monarch than a Christian priest; breaking jests upon their poverty and making themselves merry with their misfortunes; turning them among the herd of their servants into the kitchen, till dinner comes in, and then shewing them what a mighty favour it is that they are permitted to sit down at the lower end of the table among their betters."

The bitterness of the lot of the "Inferior Clergy"—the ordinary description of the parish priests—is thus set forth, presumably by one of their number:—

"Oh my Lord how prettily and temperately may a wife and half a dozen children be maintain'd with almost £30 per annum! What an handsom shift will an ingenious and frugal divine make to take it by turns and wear a cassock one year and a pair of breeches another! What a primitive sight will it be to see a man of God with his shoes out at toes, and his stockings out at heels, wandering about in an old russet coat or a tatter'd gown for apprentices to point at and wags to break jests on! And what a notable figure will he make in a pulpit on Sundays that has sent his *Hooker* and *Stillingfleet*, his *Pearson* and *Saunderson*, his *Barrow* and *Tillotson*, with many more Fathers of the *English* Church into limbo long since, to keep his wife's pensive petticoat company and her much lamented wedding-ring!"

Things were not the same all through the century. There were variations in the condition of the clergy, for in the course of a hundred years

social life undergoes many modifications. The mental and moral standpoint changes too, and the nearer we get to our own time the more noticeable does this fact become :—

"It would be difficult to find at the end of the eighteenth century men of exactly the same stamp as we find at the beginning. . . . A hundred years wrought a great change. Old-fashioned scholars, dry-as-dust antiquaries in parsonage and manse, cosy, respectable, ease-loving teachers of different denominations were largely disappearing. A new race had risen up."

Taking the Church as an organization, its attitude towards women in the eighteenth century was one of neutrality. The Church had got into a rut. It made no effort to enlist women in its service. There was nothing for them to do under the existing system. The altruistic spirit was not awake.

"The country increased rapidly in strength and in material prosperity; its growth was uninterrupted; its resources continued to develop; its political constitution gained in power and consolidation. But there was a deficiency of disinterested principle."

Perhaps it was this very deadness which produced such a reaction in the next century. It was the High Church party which was the first to make

use of the capital lying idle in the unemployed energies and zeal of the female members of the Anglican Church. The sisterhood system once more brought women into that direct relation with the Church which characterized their position in pre-Reformation times.

PERIOD IV.

WOMEN IN THE VICTORIAN ERA.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CHAPTER I.

CHANGE OF IDEAL.

Change in women's position in this century—Women's status in the past determined by the Church—De Ségur on Englishwomen—Change of thought and customs—Women in the middle classes—Enlargement of interests among the middle classes—Single women as described by Jane Austen—Marriage as a career for women—Change of opinion—The wives of to-day—Social life—Independence of unmarried women.

THERE are periods in English history when the nation seems to have taken fresh starts, to have cast its intellectual shell and become a new creature. Such a period occurred in the sixteenth century, led up to by the earlier literary *renaissance* in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and the fall of the feudal system. This century witnessed a similar awakening. It was a many-sided movement, affecting social and family life as much as intellectual progress.

The alteration in the position of women is one of the most marked features of the movement. Many will be ready to say that it has not been a

true progress, but only a restless seeking for new paths. There is nothing harder to accept than a change of ideals. And it is this kind of change which has, in the present century, created a "woman question." The ideal of womanhood which a nation creates for itself is not like the ideal of religion, of art, or of literature; it is a compound of all these things. An Indian proverb says: "Where the women are degraded, there the gods cannot live." Where the other ideals of life are low, the ideal of womanhood will be still lower. It depends on all the great social forces.

The conception of woman's place in society has undergone a process of re-making in this century. Even those who advocate keeping woman in what is called her "sphere," have admitted into that sphere many things that would have amazed their predecessors. The change has been forced on by outward circumstances as well as by a remodelling of thought, or rather, the mental aspect has been largely determined by physical conditions. The immense growth of the population, and the excess of the female portion, have altered the point of view for both men and women.

In the Middle Ages it was the Church that determined the status of women. As long as the

Church was the strongest influence in society, women were regarded as instruments for man's use, rather than as beings with an independent existence. Unreasoning obedience was enjoined, to the priest first, to the husband afterwards. Self effacement was upheld as the highest duty of women. When the influence of the Church was modified by the spread of knowledge and education, the conception took a different form, but the coarseness of manners and the rude conditions of life that prevailed, even up to the last century, prevented broader views from gaining ground. Besides which, habit was strong, and social traditions were hard to break. The eighteenth century was a period of artificiality and sham sentiment, when the ideal of womanhood was inevitably low. The fashionable world—including the women themselves—held that woman was made for pleasure; the *bourgeoisie* that she was created for domestic uses. Both agreed that intellectual occupations and interests were beyond her ken, and that she only required such knowledge as would enable her to fulfil more efficiently the duties of ministering to man's needs and amusements.

"The English women," wrote De Ségur, in 1803, "live much in the same manner as those of Turkey, with the exception of walls or keepers. Without being so much

overlooked, they suffer equal constraint. However great the superiority which they may be sensible they possess above their husbands, they are obliged to respect and to fear them ; and they therefore endeavour to acquire their love as a matter of necessity. Such is also the lesson they give to their children, and it may be remarked that they recommend it to them rather as a political measure than as a duty. In fact, they can only command by obeying ; and when it is said that a woman is happier in England than in any other country, it is only saying that she is prepared, by her education, to be more satisfied than another woman with a mediocrity of happiness."

Whether women are happier in England than formerly, or than they are in other countries, is a difficult question to determine ; but certainly the conception of womanhood which now prevails in all sections of society is different from that which was current at the beginning of the century. The evolution that has been proceeding, during the last fifty years especially, has affected women more in the middle than in the upper ranks, but in both there has been created a new ideal of what is excellent and desirable in woman. Qualities which used to be thought admirable, such as physical weakness and mental indolence, are pitied or condemned. Neither the *rôle* of pleasure nor of domesticity suffices. A woman is expected to share in all the social and intellectual activities

around her, to follow and understand, if she does not play any definite part.

The influences which mould society in the present day are more diverse than at former periods. Thought is freer, and is constantly enriched by travelling along new tracks opened out by the advances of civilization. It is less difficult now to acquire new mental habits than to retain old ones. The forms of social life have changed with the times, and the forms occasionally outrun the conception. New ways are adopted while the old instincts are uppermost. A fresh custom, brought about by a variety of indirect causes, helps to produce a change of thought, practice accomplishing what reasoning would never have achieved. The necessity for conforming to the altered conditions of daily life—conditions which have not been predetermined, but have been developed in the march of material progress—has done much to re-cast the old notion of the position of women. If locomotion were not so easy, if the means of education were not so plentiful, if invention had not lightened the burden of domestic duties, the conception of woman as a dependent, half-developed being, to whom the world was ever to remain an oyster with closed shell, would have been perpetuated still. The new ideal came in when the means of its embodiment were ready.

With the constant interaction going on in the social life of the nation, it is difficult to say always which are causes and which are effects. There are thinkers who formulate ideas and then endeavour to shape the conditions of life to fit those ideas. But with the majority it is the conditions of life that create the ideas. For one person who has, by reasoning, convinced himself that it is a perfectly legitimate thing for women to pursue literature or art as a profession, to acquire a knowledge of business, to travel about unattended, there are a hundred who have been brought to that conclusion by a plurality of daughters, the establishment of cheap schools and colleges, the omnibus and tram-car service. Facts convince more speedily than theories.

The ideal has changed more for women in the middle than in the upper ranks. The great lady is not only hedged about with traditions and customs difficult to break through, but she is constantly on parade, so to speak, while the woman in every-day life, though she may be hampered by prejudice, is able to alter her course comparatively unobserved. It is the middle classes who have been most affected by the movement known as the "women question," a movement which, as Carl Bücher observed, existed long before it began to be discussed at afternoon

tea-tables. The course of social life in England during the last fifty years has been to create a gradual revolution in the position of women in the middle ranks. Less change has occurred in the domestic life of those above. The great industrial revolution has affected them indirectly, the improvements and inventions of science and the growth of commerce have added to their ease and luxuries, but they have not been actually swept by these things into a new current of life.

For women of the middle classes it has been impossible to stand still. They have been forced to adapt themselves to the new order. Their old employments have been taken away from them; they have been ousted by men and machinery from places where they were once supreme. Added to this, the female population largely outnumbering the male, wedded life is clearly out of the question for great numbers of women. In the Middle Ages there were so many men withdrawn from the country for military service as to create a similar disproportion. The women, however, were in a different position. They were not, as in later times, thrown back upon sedentary employments, but actively engaged in carrying on the industries of the country, in producing food and clothing and other things required for daily life.

The women of the middle classes have found themselves in the curiously lop-sided position of people with more leisure than means. Precluded from the necessity for work, they cannot afford the recreations of a leisured class. They are equally removed from the temptations of the wealthy and the poor. One of two things commonly happens. Either they sink into a vapid manner of life, in which the passage of the hours is marked by meal-times, or they become volunteers in some "cause." They join political leagues, enter upon a crusade against drinking or vivisection, make war against some of the multiform expressions of vice, or courageously grapple with the hydra-headed monster—poverty. All the movements for the bettering of society owe their usefulness in a large measure to the zeal of the women workers of the middle classes. The evolution of women in these classes during the last fifty years is a study in itself, and will form a prominent feature in the social history of the nineteenth century.

The factors that have contributed to the elevation and prosperity of the middle class as a whole have been in some ways detrimental to the evolution of women. They have fallen back in the ranks. In the development of trade and commerce men have advanced and the women have been left behind.

It was the men who held the money-bags, and who, as soon as the power of the purse became stronger than the cunning of the hand, reaped the advantage. As the social organism grew more complex, women lost both their work and their privileges.

But in other ways their position has greatly improved. A hundred years ago the average middle-class woman had no interests outside her family circle and acquaintances. If domestic duties and claims were few, as frequently happened in a houseful of daughters, time hung heavily on her hands. "Marry I cannot, to work I am ashamed," was the unuttered thought of the girl who saw the years slipping by with an horizon of diminished interests, as youthful delights faded and family ties were broken by death and separation. A single woman was regarded as a social failure.

"Un préjugé général et fort ancien attache une espèce de flétrissure au célibat des femmes. Le titre de vieille fille a quelque chose de honteux, parce qu'il semble annoncer l'abandon de tout un sexe. Ce préjugé, plus commun dans les pays où le célibat n'a pas été consacré par des institutions réligieuses, n'est nulle part plus généralement repandu qu'en Angleterre; nulle part aussi il n'y a un plus grand nombre de vieilles filles." *

Miss Austen's heroine, "Emma," in the plenitude

* Ferri de St. Constant.

Another feature of present-day domestic life is the altered attitude of married women. The middle-class wife was not formerly wont to concern herself about matters outside her own home. If she did she was usually told that she was neglecting her duties.

"Le plaisir d'élever leurs enfans, celui de plaire à leurs maris, et d'être aimées de leurs domestiques, remplissent tellement le cœur du plus grand nombre des femmes anglaises, que ce n'est souvent que par décence qu'elles se permettent les amusemens de la société. Si, par état, elles prennent quelques soins de leur parure, elles en sont moins occupées que de leur ménage. Comme elles sont toujours les amies de leur mari, elles paraissent sans honte les économes de leurs biens." *

A woman was brought up from girlhood in an atmosphere of restricted interests, and when she became a wife she did not attempt to enlarge her horizon. She became more and more shut up in her domestic shell :—

"Soumises à des maris de leur choix, les femmes préviennent en tout leurs désirs, et s'en laissent entièrement maîtriser : elles envisagent leurs volontés comme des loix, et paroissent se croire nées pour la dépendance, état habituel chez elles qui leur coûte peu, mais que les Anglois regardent comme un devoir. Le brusquerie des maris, l'espèce de dureté de leur caractère, rendroient le sort des femmes extrêmement malheureux, sans cette

* "Londres, la Cour, et les Provinces," 1816.

condescendance qui leur est naturelle : on a peine a reconnoître en eux de la tendresse de l'attachement, au moins les marques n'en sont elles par extérieures ; ils sont maîtres, et ne cherchent point à déguiser leur autorité." *

To the Frenchman, accustomed to *mariages de convenance*, it was a novel and interesting spectacle to see matches based on affection. He observes, as an unusual and noteworthy fact : " Une Anglaise aime son mari autant qu'elle l'estime. Il est rare qu'elle s'occupe du soin de plaire à d'autres."

In the present day, although the Englishwoman does not love her husband less, she finds room for other interests besides those within the four walls of her home. In all the new movements, in politics, in philanthropy, in social reform, the married women are prominent workers. They belong chiefly to the middle class, who have traditional instincts of activity. Like the great lady, they have realized that they must enlarge their borders. Domestic life has so changed that the old *rôle* of the wife as the home-keeper must be modified. To spend the best hours of the day in what is called " looking after the house" is clearly an anomaly in the present stage of civilization. In olden times it was just as clearly a woman's business to devote herself to the ordering of her

* " Tableau de la Grande Bretagne," 1802.

of her superiority, sums up the case of her less fortunate sisters thus—

"A single woman with a very narrow income must be a ridiculous, disagreeable old maid, the proper sport of boys and girls, but a single woman of good fortune is always respectable, and may be as sensible and pleasant as anybody else."

The idea that marriage was the only career for a woman was so firmly embedded in the English mind that numbers of girls had been encouraged to fritter their lives away on trifles which gave them no satisfaction, because it was not considered worth while for them to take up any definite pursuit which they might have to abandon some day for matrimony. The result has usually been dulness and discontent.

"A houseful of marriageable English girls in a quiet English family is not the most perfect form of domestic life possible. . . . Home is a weary place for most young girls without fortunes or much chance of marrying. . . . What our girls want in general is more occupation, something to interest and excite them, pending the greatest interest possible to them. Pleasure does not come into the ordinary programme of a quiet, matter-of-fact English family." *

English middle-class sentiment did not go so far as to consider a bad husband better than no

* *Temple Bar*, 1862.

husband at all, like Bianca, the maid in attendance on the Princess Matilda in "The Castle of Otranto," but the principle commonly acted on was that the risks of marriage, even where the conditions were indifferent, were less to be dreaded than a life of lonely spinsterhood.

The middle classes have now thrown off this notion. It lingers in the upper and lower ranks where tradition is stronger, where for different reasons marriage is sought after as the easiest solution of a difficult problem. Here, again, the middle classes differ from those above and below them in not being subject to the same temptations. They are not urged into marriage by the prospects of a desirable alliance that will unite two neighbouring estates or preserve property intact. Nor does matrimony present itself as an escape from material discomfort. Viewed as a career marriage holds a less important place than formerly. It is now only one among many choices open to women. In the second half of this century, more particularly in the last quarter, women have been less ready to rush into matrimony. Parents have not shown such eagerness to dispose of their daughters to the first man who offered. Marriage is contracted later in life. A bride under twenty-one is thought extraordinarily youthful.

household. She had to superintend and take part in a dozen operations which are now performed in factories and workshops, and of which the modern housewife only sees the results. Even women who cannot command much service have, or might have, a degree of leisure which would have been thought only fit for a lady of quality a century ago. The sewing-machine alone is a great emancipator. The facilities for obtaining food supplies have done away with many lengthy domestic operations, and household production is being reduced to a minimum. Latterly there have been proposals to establish co-operative kitchens, and in the future it may be found as easy and natural to have our food cooked at some great centre, and sent in at stated hours, as it is now to have our clothes made and our bread baked. It is probable, as Bebel says, that—

"social life will, in the future, become more and more public; the tendency in this direction has already made itself apparent, and most clearly in the totally altered position of women in comparison with earlier times. Household life will be reduced to the narrowest possible limits, and the widest field will be opened for the gratification of social instincts."

Among other signs which show that social life is becoming more public is the formation of clubs

and "dwellings." These institutions are part of the altered conditions under which women of the middle classes not only earn their own living, but lead an independent life. The increasing number of women who, partly from choice, partly from necessity, stand alone—who, as in the case of journalists, for instance, follow a career which does not accord with the routine of a household, has created a tendency to a more public manner of life. In former days unmarried women, when they found themselves without means, if they failed to become governesses, lived in a dependent position with such relatives or friends as would receive them, or starved out their life in miserable lodgings by various shifts and devices. Those who had anything like the semblance of a home appeared to think it better to stay there rather than to make an independence for themselves by going out into the world. The notion of what is fitting for a woman has entirely changed. Girls are no longer content to live on their fathers and brothers, who, on their side, are not unwilling to be relieved from the burden of their maintenance. There are many more women now who work by preference, though not compelled to earn their living. The middle-class woman prefers a daily, outside occupation, which enables her to keep up a more luxurious

35640

home than if she expended her energies on sewing and household work. More than this, she wants a definite interest.

The result of modern education and training has been to inspire women with what is sometimes called discontent and restlessness, but may be more properly described as energy demanding an outlet. The more active-minded seek to escape from a home life rendered monotonous by the absence of both duties and pleasures by taking up some regular occupation. Frequently they are told that they are snatching the bread out of the mouth of the needy. It is tacitly conceded that men, whatever their position, are always entitled to employ themselves, to continue working and making money after the absolute necessity for earning has ceased to exist. A man in the prime of life who rests on his oars because there is no absolute need for activity is thought an idler. Society seems to think it has a right to his energy and capacity for multiplying riches. But the woman who makes money without any apparent need is told that she is standing in the way of others, and should betake herself to some unremunerative work of charity, for which she may be quite unfitted.

Miss Mitford, writing in 1849 to one of her friends, says:—

"You are quite right about the want of objects for single women. In France the rank just below the gentry is made at once useful and happy by keeping the shop-books. In England even that resource is wanting, and that class is added to the idle and the wretched worsted-working young ladies. Among the other evils, too, the want of better occupation drives girls to write bad verse."

At one time it was true, both of England and of Germany, that "the daughters of our middle-class families are trained as dolls, fools of fashion, and ladies who can grace a drawing-room." * But it is true no longer. The daughters of the middle class are, generally speaking, trained as those who will become workers. If the need for work does not arise, the desire to live with a purpose in view, to achieve something, remains and must be satisfied, or society will suffer from the dangerous existence of undirected, unemployed energy. This is, however, a danger not much to be feared in the present day.

"Not the least among the changes is that effected by the fuller and freer life led by all women. A greater companionship and friendship is permitted them with the other sex; there is a larger sharing of interests, and women are expected to have a higher standard of education, and to conceal their knowledge and culture with tasteful skill. Their interest in the political life of the country, and their acknowledged usefulness in their proper place in the

* Bebel.

working of the political machine, the works, philanthropical and social, which are admitted by all to be within their sphere, have broadened and deepened the stream of life which is common to both sexes, and brought the social on to a different level." *

* *Saturday Review*, May 19, 1894.

CHAPTER II.

THE MODERN GREAT LADY.

Fusion of classes—Social progress—Modification of women's position in the higher ranks—Duties of the modern great lady—Her new *rôle*.

ONE of the most striking features of modern life is the fusion of classes, the result being that it is more and more difficult to characterize the various sections of society which we still agree to separate by name. The material improvements, which every year bring more facilities for the art of living, are working changes in social relations. A great many differences which formerly existed have been obliterated. It is no distinction now to have received a good education, to have travelled, to be able to appreciate works of art, to have a tastefully arranged house, to be abreast of current thought. All these things are taken for granted just as much as that a gentleman will not get drunk, or a lady interlard her conversation with oaths. It would

seem, then, that we have attained a higher level in social life, that the next century will see us with a still loftier standard, and that we shall go on progressing unless some cataclysm shakes the social edifice, or some hidden rottenness is revealed in the foundations. The fact that progress has been made, and is making, along several lines, not in one only, is a great safeguard against dissolution or decay. In Greece social and moral progress did not keep pace with intellectual advance. The rank and file were enslaved, women were in a state of subjection, religion and morality were dissociated, while the greatest philosophers, the greatest poets, the greatest artists were building up for themselves an immortal fame.

"There appears to have been no refuge for the sick; the infant was entirely unprotected; and infanticide, having been—at least in the case of deformed children—expressly authorized by both Plato and Aristotle, was seldom regarded as a crime. The practice of bringing up orphans avowedly for prostitution was equally common." *

In England the remarkable development of the altruistic spirit has softened the relations between the classes, and side by side with the intellectual movement has been a rapid development of the science of living. It is easier, however, to see the

* W. H. Lecky, "Rationalism in Europe," vol. ii.

actual stage at which we have arrived in social science by studying society in sections rather than as a whole. Woman's position in the higher ranks has undergone much modification. She is less individual, more impersonal, in her influence. At the beginning of the century we had in London something like a *salon* at various houses. Lady Holland, Lady Blessington, Lady Cork, Lady Charleville, Lady Caroline Lamb, and others were noted centres to which art, learning, and beauty were attracted as if by some magic wand. No one has kept up the traditions of Holland House or of Gore House. There are no society leaders of European celebrity, but the *salons* in London are multiplied tenfold. We have profound thinkers, brilliant writers, acute statesmen, gay wits, and popular beauties; they are to be met in hundreds of places in twos and threes, but they do not congregate as of yore under one roof.

But, taken as a whole, women are not less of a power in social life among the upper classes. Their influence is more felt because there is more equality of feeling between the sexes. Where there was before mere gallantry on the part of men and coquetry on the part of the women there is now the simpler and the healthier relation of comradeship. Putting aside the graver aspects of life and questions

of moral conduct, this change from sentimentalism to reality, from affectation to simplicity, is a step onwards for women. There is nothing which so retards the progress of woman as putting her on a plane by herself. Whether she is the "painted evil" of the Fathers' imagination, or the immaculate star of the romanticist, she is equally cut off from the chances of development. It has been the ill-luck of women to be credited with both sub-human and super-human qualities.

Whatever the faults of the present age, it is under no delusions with regard to the humanity of woman. There are few trials, difficulties, or unpleasantnesses that she escapes on the score of sex. It is not thought that she is incapable of bearing a part in the common life of the world on account of any ethereal qualities. Some will be inclined to add that she also receives less personal attention in society. But the mode of interpreting the phrase "*Place aux dames*" has, in the past, been rather a hindrance than a help to women. It has too often been a show of deference in trifles which meant nothing, but which it gratified the vanity of men to offer, and of women to receive. It was this kind of attention which made the women of the last century so foolishly dependent on men.

"In the most trying dangers they cling to their support with parasitical tenacity, piteously demanding succour; and their *natural* protector extends his arm, or lifts up his voice to guard the lovely trembler—from what? Perhaps the form of an old cow, or the jump of a mouse; a rat would be a serious danger. In the name of reason and even common sense, what can save such beings from contempt?" *

The conception of what constitutes a great lady is more complex in the present day. Much is expected of her to whom much has been given. Her rank is no excuse for mental indolence; on the contrary, if she allows her mind to rust, she disgraces her position. She is not exempted from work on the ground of wealth; it is not enough that she should give sovereigns from her purse or flowers from her hot-houses; she must attend committees and conferences, pore over accounts and blue-books, to say nothing of performing a variety of ornamental functions in order that her presence may encourage others to come forward. Instead of, as formerly, being "taught to look down with contempt on the vulgar employments of life," she learns to regard them as claiming her consideration, if not her actual co-operation. She is expected to be "all things to all men," for while she is stretching out her sympathies far and wide, none of the

* Mary Wollstonecraft, "Rights of Women."

demands of her own class may be neglected. She is imperiously called upon to perform her part as a woman of fashion: to entertain and visit, pay her quota to society, and be as perfect in this *rôle* as if it were the only one she had to play. The strain is considerable, for the great lady has few moments when she is off guard and can relax the tension. Women of lesser rank can at least enjoy the rest of obscurity, but a great lady is seldom able to withdraw herself entirely from public gaze. In the country she is even more observed than in London, and fresh duties crowd upon her when she seeks retirement.

The peculiar characteristics of English life among the upper classes, the lavish expenditure in domestic matters, the multiplicity of servants, the style of entertainment, all help to make the burden heavier than it would be in a country where material ease was less studied. Proud as we may be of our attainment of comfort—a word for which the French have no equivalent—we have certainly made it a fetish in England. It takes precedence of other and weightier considerations. While we reprobate the French *mariages de convenance* we cannot deny the number of such marriages in England. The picture drawn by a Frenchman of an English great lady in the middle of this century—gloomy

though it is, and wounding to our self-esteem as a nation whose country has been called the paradise of married women—cannot be said to be an unfaithful presentation of a large section of the monied class.

"Etudiez la grande dame au pays d'Albion. Ne vous laissez point éblouir par le luxe qui l'entoure, par la hauteur qu'elle affecte. Les appartements dorés, les colliers de perles, les couronnes de diamants, les habits somptueux, les équipages brillants, les grooms chamarrés, ne donnent ni la considération, ni le respect, ni l'affection, ni le bonheur. Pénétrez plus avant dans sa vie intime ; quelle triste réalité se découvre à vos yeux. La femme anglaise, la mère de famille, n'est plus la compagne estimée, honorée, et chérie de son mari. Elle est, suivant un mot connu, la première servante de la maison." *

This, however, is only one aspect of our social life, though one we cannot ignore. In following the course of women's evolution in England, we cannot expect to have an orderly progression, without any backslidings or false steps. The abounding luxury of a rich English family, the compactness of domestic life, and its self-sufficiency are deceptive. They imply a degree of security and happiness which is too often absent. When, as in many cases, the establishment comes first, and is paramount over all other considerations, the result is

* Gaume, "De la Société Domestique."

likely to be that which M. Gaume has described: the mistress is subordinated to the house. The husband and wife are united by a mutual worship of well-ordered luxury. They have no other interests or sympathies in common; their marriage has a purely material basis. It is here that the English great lady appears to have made a step backwards. In less refined periods her personal influence counted for more in family life, because wealth implied individual obligations towards society which are now carried out by deputy. Her authority was greater when the domestic machinery was less perfect. But as, little by little, she inevitably lost something of the importance of her old position, she did not take upon herself new powers. As luxury increased, the duties which once fell upon the great lady were all absorbed into a carefully regulated system, worked by capable machines, of whom the lady herself is the nominal head. In reality, the system goes on without interference on the part of the mistress, whose control, though absolute in theory, is almost *nil* in practice. But she is forced to play a certain part for the sake of appearances. There are women of wealth who appear to exist only for the sake of their position. The very weapons which should give them freedom for moral and

intellectual growth they turn against themselves. They are smothered under the burden of riches.

But although some will always be left in the backwaters, the great ladies of this century, in spite of a tendency to rigidity, are rapidly being swept into the strong current of intellectual and social activity. Nothing shows more plainly the change which has taken place in the position of women than the presence, in the work-a-day world of politics, philanthropy, literature, and even trade, of women who, by tradition, should be reposing under their ancestral oaks, or daintily adorning some State function. The women themselves feel that the old *rôle* of the great lady is played out, and are adapting themselves to the new part. To describe the nineteenth-century women's movement among the upper classes as a mere seeking after new excitement would not be correct. The persistence of the workers shows that there is something more than a passing attraction in their undertakings. Discontent and dissatisfaction with particular circumstances, which are so often the motives to action, are likewise insufficient to explain the vigorous zeal and cheerful patience with which difficult schemes are attacked and carried through. The fact is women have outgrown their old position. In the case of women of rank and wealth, they are born

amid surroundings which chafe them. They decline to be kept in a world of their own, breathing only one atmosphere. And it must be admitted that they see no special satisfaction in a sphere where feminine graces are somewhat at a discount. They would rather be in the larger world of action, where men will meet them on equal terms, and treat them as comrades and fellows.

Although in France the evolution of women has not proceeded along the same lines as in England, although French women are in some respects more advanced, and in others more backward than women in England—it is interesting to note that the same tendencies which the upholders of the old order deplore are observable in both nations. The anti-Catholic spirit which followed the Revolution and the break-up of traditional habits is perhaps accountable for much of the change which has passed over domestic life in France. To those of the *ancien régime* all the characteristics of the modern life—the very liking for out-door amusements on the part of women—were so many indications of an irreligious, degenerate spirit. The picture which Gaume drew of his countrywomen in 1844 might stand in many of its features for the Englishwomen of to-day—

"Vous adoptez des habitudes qui ne conviennent ni à

votre sexe, ni à votre vocation ; vous avez cru vous rendre fortes, et vous êtes dévenues faibles. Jeunes, on vous voit faire des exercices gymnastiques comme des collégiens ; vous exercer à l'escrime comme des élèves de nos écoles militaires ; à la natation comme des marins ; vous montez à cheval comme les écuyers de Franconi ; on dit même que vous fumez comme des hussards de l'empire. (Ce n'est pas un *on dit*, c'est un fait ; nous l'avons vu en pleine rue, dans Paris, la ville modèle.) Plus agées, vous paraissez dans des cercles d'hommes et de jeunes gens, dont vous partagez les goûts, les lectures, les conversations ; vous êtes dévenues comme l'un d'eux, et l'homme vous traite comme son semblable."

There is nothing which appears more dreadful to the old-world spectator than to see a man treating a woman *comme son semblable*—woman who ought always to be an angel, a goddess, a being who should know nothing of the prose of life. But the modern women—especially the great ladies—are tired of poetry; they have grown up with a distaste for sentiment—they prefer the prose. Surely it is a little unjust to the male sex to assume that women must impair their finer qualities, and lose something of their natural delicacy by sharing the pursuits and conversation of men.

CHAPTER III.

WOMEN AS TRAVELLERS AND EXPLORERS.

English enterprise and love of travel—Travelling for pleasure a modern taste — Ida Pfeiffer — Lady Hester Stanhope — Miss Bird—Miss Annie Taylor—Lady Baker—Lady Euan Smith—Lady Sale.

AMONG the things for which the Victorian age will be noted hereafter is the passion for travelling which has taken possession of people of varied ranks and conditions. It scarcely excites remark now to find women—if they are Englishwomen—wandering from one continent to another unaccompanied. And Englishwomen who travel in this way usually earn a character for pluck and self-reliance. In a humorous sketch, entitled "The Englishwoman Abroad," Lawrence Oliphant declares that the women of England materially assist in keeping up the prestige of the British name by their admirable conduct as travellers in unfrequented parts, where they cause the astonished natives to exclaim, "If these are the women, what

splendid fellows the men must be!" Everybody who can afford it travels, and those who formerly would have regarded a trip to the Continent as the *ultima Thule* of their ambitions, now take a tourist-ticket which carries them half round the world. Travelling over ocean and land has become so easy and luxurious, that the greatest sybarites are tempted into making long journeys. It was not so a century ago. Sailing-vessels, stage-coaches, or the unwieldy vehicles called travelling-carriages, and the probability of being robbed on the road and plundered at the inn, made a journey beyond England a terror to the weak and timid. Even in our own country it was a matter not to be lightly undertaken. The men who crossed continents and oceans were looked upon by their compatriots with respectful admiration, and could always command an audience, for they had faced the unknown. In these days, when the greater portion of the habitable globe has been traversed, travel has lost its glamour, and the traveller the distinction he once enjoyed. The only people who can claim attention for their journeys are the few adventurous spirits who have penetrated into undesirable regions whither the tourist does not care to follow; those who have travelled with the purpose of making some discovery, or achieving some

end—scientific, commercial, or religious; or those who have, for the pure love of adventure and exploration, sought out places hitherto unvisited.

Among these few fortunate ones, who stand out with a certain pre-eminence above their fellow-creatures, women are now to be reckoned. The qualities necessary for making a good traveller—adaptability and patience, and a keen eye for detail—women usually possess in fair measure. Explorers, however, need something more. They must combine the enthusiasm of the discoverer with the endurance of the soldier, and the indifference to danger common to both. There are some women who will court the risk and hardship of travelling away from the beaten track for the mere excitement of the adventure, who have had no special end in view, and have gone forth alone into the unknown. But they are few. When Ida Pfeiffer, the Austrian, undertook her voyage round the world in the forties she had few, if any, predecessors. Nor has she had many imitators.

Although Madame Pfeiffer was not an Englishwoman, her name as the pioneer of women travellers cannot be omitted. She began her journeying in 1842, when her husband was separated from her, and her children were old enough to care for themselves. Her first journey seems to have been to

the Holy Land. Four years later she visited South America. In making excursions from Rio Janeiro she was very nearly murdered on one occasion by a negro, who surprised her in a lonely place. Madame Pfeiffer appears on that expedition to have had a lady with her as a travelling companion. Their only weapon of defence other than parasols was a clasp-knife. Madame Pfeiffer received two wounds in the left arm. In making her famous voyage round the world, Madame Pfeiffer had sometimes to wear male dress, as when in Tahiti. She once obtained access to a Buddhist temple, a thing which no European woman had ever achieved. All sorts of difficulties and adventures befell her. She encountered hostile Cossacks; she traversed the wild highlands of Persia; she travelled for miles with caravans; she navigated rivers at great peril. In Sumatra it was only her extreme coolness and presence of mind that saved her from being literally devoured by a horde of savages who were quite prepared to eat her. Madame Pfeiffer, it must be remembered, had very small means with which to undertake such immense journeys. She could not afford the luxuries of travel. She had no money to spend on good escorts, and she had as a rule no companion to share her enterprise. Referring to this last point, Madame Pfeiffer says in her journal

that she considered at forty-five she was competent to travel unattended. Her life had not been an easy one, and she had acquired independence of character. As for money she knew she must practise the strictest economy, but the prospect of privation did not alarm her. She was aware that she would not find railways and hotels in the parts she proposed to visit, and would be at great charges to support life on any terms, but the love of adventure was a passion too strong to be resisted. She was one of those who delighted in travel for its own sake.

But although there were few women who undertook to encircle the globe like Madame Pfeiffer, there were some notable travellers in the last century. Pitt's eccentric niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, after his death resolved to expatriate herself. She began by going to Greece, and making Lord Byron's acquaintance at Athens. Then she went to Constantinople, where she stayed some years. From Constantinople she proceeded in an English merchant-vessel to Syria, and on the voyage was wrecked off the Island of Rhodes on a reef, and lost all her valuables, an adventure which obliged her to return to England to make good her losses. This done, she resolved to go to Asia. A journey to the East was no light undertaking in those days.

Having reached Syria, she made her way through the cities of Jerusalem, Damascus, Aleppo, Palmyra, and Baulbek, finally fixing her resting-place on Mount Lebanon. The Arab tribes among whom she wandered sometimes amused themselves by testing her courage, but she was always equal to the occasion. Her hardihood and love of adventure placed her quite above the ordinary level. Her occupations at Mount Lebanon were multifarious, for she was constantly trying to arouse the Druses into rebellion against Ibrahim Pasha, watching the behaviour of the different consuls to see if they did their duty—"bringing them to their bearings," she called it—and backing up the Sultan against his enemies. Besides these political interests, she employed herself in vigilant direction of the affairs of her household, preventing intrigues among her servants, and stirring up the idle to activity by opprobrious epithets in Arabic equivalent to "beast," "rascal," "stupid fellow," which she followed by sharp blows from her stick. The *ménage* was simple to the verge of shabbiness. She used cracked china of different patterns, and her bedroom was constantly littered with tobacco and ashes. Smoking was her one personal extravagance. She used the most expensive wooden pipes, such as would cost from five to ten shillings in London,

and threw them away after a day or two's use. Her correspondence was large, and her charities were many, but she was shamefully deserted by her household in her last days, and when Mr. Moore, the English Consul at Beyrout, rode over the mountains, hearing of her illness, he arrived to find Lady Hester's neglected corpse lying in an empty house.

Independent women travellers are rare even in England, the country of all others for producing travellers and explorers. Miss Bird (Mrs. Bishop) is one of the most enterprising of travellers, and has visited parts where European women had seldom if ever been seen before. Miss Marianne North, in her botanical and other researches, went far and wide, piercing the recesses of Eastern Asia. Lady Baker and Lady Burton accompanied their husbands on perilous journeys. Several of the wives of missionaries might be reckoned amongst the travellers and explorers who have faced every kind of discomfort, and braved danger, sometimes earning death as their reward, as happened recently in China.

Lady Baker showed immense energy and courage in the expedition to Central Africa. She plodded by her husband's side in the wearisome, dangerous marches through a country swarming

with enemies, carrying a revolver in her waistband. It will be remembered that Sir Samuel Baker undertook to go to Central Africa to suppress the slave trade, the expedition being organized by the Khedive of Egypt. The climate, the country, and the people were all alike treacherous and obnoxious to Europeans. The mere discomforts of such a journey would have deterred most women from attempting it; for, to put it mildly, in the words of Sir Samuel Baker himself, "bodily fatigue is inseparable from African travel." The party started in 1869 and returned in 1873—a long time to endure hardness. During the journey Lady Baker made a large botanical collection which Sir Samuel presented to the Khedive, and which was afterwards sent to the Vienna Exhibition.*

Lady Baker was always ready to act for her husband during his enforced absences. On one occasion, when an attack was expected from the natives on the Government quarters at Masindi, Lady Baker prepared everything before the general's arrival. She armed the men, and had them ready posted, besides getting together all the spare ammunition. She was keenly alive to every possible danger, and on the alert in emergencies, but as cool and collected as an experienced soldier.

* "Ismailia."

When Sir Samuel Baker was surprised by a sudden act of treachery on the part of the natives, who were preparing to make a raid upon the station, Lady Baker was ready at his side with a rifle; and when a number of the troops were poisoned by some cider, she at once took upon herself the office of physician, and went round administering remedies. She was also of great assistance by her foresight and prudence. When they were on the march and the food supply was almost exhausted, she produced from a secret place a store of flour. While there was plenty Lady Baker had put aside small quantities from time to time, saying nothing lest the men should be led into extravagance. At the critical moment she disclosed her store, enough for a seven-days' march, and the gratitude of the troops found vent in the words, "God shall give her a long life." On the march to Rionga from Masindi —which station Sir Samuel Baker was compelled to fire—Lady Baker not only carried a Colt's revolver, but also some spare ammunition. It was a perilous march, fighting nearly all the way, and lances were freely flying about Lady Baker. The General says that he himself saw several pass within an inch or two of her head.

The marches were extremely laborious, through jungle and high grass. There was constant wading

through mud and fording small streams, and wet boots filled with sand added to the fatigue. Lady Baker became very footsore, and sometimes there was no place to call a halt without going out of the track. On one occasion they had only one sick donkey and one horse with a sore back, so Lady Baker was compelled to plod through the deep mud, and to wade for a mile and a half through flooded marshes, up to her hips in water. Nothing daunted her in the way of difficulty or danger, and she was always ready with warning and help when peril approached. Not the least heavy part of her self-imposed duties was the care of the sick and wounded. When no doctor was at hand, Lady Baker was nurse and physician in one; and her presence inspired the patients with hope and aided them in their recovery. Her skill must have been considerable, for through all the trials of climate, and the conditions attendant upon such an expedition, General Baker says that he only lost one man through sickness out of a detachment of two hundred and twelve in the space of fourteen months, and that one was at an out-station.

On the previous expedition to the Albert Nyanza, the great basin of the Nile, Lady Baker displayed readiness and courage at a critical juncture. The men mutinied because they were

not allowed to steal cattle from the natives. The ringleader, an Arab, was ordered by the general to receive twenty-five lashes. This put a climax to the discontent, and Sir Samuel Baker was in great danger, the men making a sudden rush upon him. Lady Baker, although lying ill with fever, started up on hearing the disturbance, and forced a passage to her husband. The men fell back a little at her approach, and the better disposed rallied round their chief, while the rebels retreated, carrying off their leader. Lady Baker then showed her judgment. She at once begged the General to pardon the author of the mutiny if he would apologize in due form. The men supported this proposition, and the tumult was appeased.

It was in this expedition that Lady Baker very nearly lost her life. While crossing the bed of a river covered with thickly matted water grass, she received a sunstroke, and she became insensible and helpless. For seven days she suffered from severe brain fever; her grave was being prepared when she began to revive and recover her senses and strength.

Several years before Lady Baker's memorable journeys, Miss Bird had made some perilous explorations among the Rocky Mountains. Miss Bird's courage and endurance are all the more

remarkable in that she appears to have had only the pleasure and interest of travelling as her end in view, and, except incidentally, was not concerned with making scientific or other discoveries. She had not the stimulus of being engaged in a great political and humanitarian enterprise like the suppression of the slave trade. Miss Bird was a genuine traveller, keen in appreciation, enthusiastic in enjoyment, and untiring in energy. She was ready to undergo any hardships, as her own simple but graphic narrative clearly shows. On one occasion during her travels in the Rocky Mountains a heavy storm came on, and so transformed all landmarks that she says:—

"I lost my way in the snow, and when I reached the cabin after dark I found it still empty, for the two hunters, on finding that I had gone out, had gone in search of me. The snow cleared off late, and intense frost set in. My room is nearly the open air, being built of unchinked logs, and, as in the open air, one requires to sleep with the head buried in blankets, or the eyelids and breath freeze. . . . To-day has been one of manual labour. We did not breakfast till 9.30, then the men went out, and I did not sit down till two. I cleared the living-room and the kitchen, swept a path through the rubbish in the passage-room, washed up, made and baked a batch of bread and four pounds of sweet biscuits, cleaned some tins and pans, washed some clothes, and gave things generally 'a redding up.'"

Miss Bird describes the shifts to which she was reduced at Colorado, where she remained for three months with only a small carpet-bag of clothes, none of which were new.

"These, by legitimate wear, the depredation of calves, and the necessity of tearing some of them for dish-cloths, are reduced to a single change. I have a solitary pocket-handkerchief and one pair of stockings, one mass of darns. I am almost without shoes, have nothing but a pair of slippers and some 'arctics.' I have a trained black silk dress, with a black silk polonaise! and nothing else but my old flannel riding-suit, which is quite threadbare, and requires such mending that I am sometimes obliged to 'dress' for supper and patch and darn it during the evening. I have to face the bitter winds with the mercury at zero and below it in exactly the same clothing which I wore in the tropics. The dry air makes it possible to do that."

The women who have gone to the East as missionaries have frequently had to play the part of explorers. Their lot has been as difficult, and even perilous, as that of travellers who have gone for purposes of exploit. Miss Annie Taylor, who belonged to the China Inland Mission, went to places unsafe for foreigners, and to reach which involved terrible hardships. In 1884 she went to China, and studied the language. Three years later she made an attempt to penetrate Tibet from the Indian side. This she found impossible, there

being no British control there. She got up near a Tibetan fort, and lived in a hut close to a monastery. For ten months she never saw a European. After this Miss Taylor determined to try the Chinese side of Tibet; so, having secured a Chinese servant, who afterwards behaved so violently that the Tibetans themselves interfered to protect her, she sailed for Shanghai, and at length reached the borders of Tibet. When she penetrated the interior she found herself in a wild, picturesque country infested with robbers. Miss Taylor's escort consisted of five fighting-men and her personal attendants. With this slender force she had to encounter a band of two hundred brigands. Two of her party were killed and five were wounded, but Miss Taylor was saved from injury herself by reason of her sex, as the Tibetans think it shameful to strike a woman. When the cold was very intense, about Christmas time, they lost their way for three days, and were glad to take shelter in a cave. Miss Taylor was desirous of going through the district of Lhassa, where, it is said, only two Europeans have ever been—and they never returned. The official who gave her information about the country declared that he would lose his head if he were to be seen there, in such distrust are foreigners held. Miss Taylor's Chinese servant proved a

faithless scoundrel, who tried to obtain credit for himself by giving information that a European was approaching. During the return journey from Tibet one of her party—a strong man—died from the cold. For nearly three weeks she had to sleep in the open air, on the ground. During her journeyings Miss Taylor came across a tribe known as the Golocks, who had a woman for their chief, with the euphonious name of Wachu Burmo. This sovereign was pleased with the English lady-missionary, and graciously accorded her a royal safeguard. Miss Taylor at length fell in with a Yak. caravan, and travelled with them back to China. Some idea of the difficulty of progress may be gathered from the fact that two hundred Yaks were engaged in cutting a passage through twenty feet of snow. Miss Taylor was the first Englishwoman who reached the heart of Tibet.

It was said of Lady Euan Smith, wife of Sir Charles Euan Smith, that she had seen service in every quarter of the globe, and needed no other protection than that of the British flag. Lady Smith accompanied her husband wherever he went, and when he was Minister Plenipotentiary at Mowero she would go fearlessly about among the natives with her camera, taking photographs.

"What soldiers these women make!" exclaimed the Sultan.

Captain Barker Snow's wife was his companion through fifty-seven years of foreign adventures. It was she who paved the way for the South American missionaries—a service which was gratefully recognized by the society. Mrs. Snow is said to have been the first white woman who went to Tierra del Fuego, Cape Horn, and some other parts of South America.

Lady Sale, who accompanied Sir Robert Sale to Afghanistan, was present throughout all the horrors of the war, which she described in very graphic language in her journal. Sir Robert Peel said—

"We are now acknowledging military services, but I should never excuse myself if, in mentioning the name of Sir Robert Sale, I did not record my admiration of the character of a woman who has shed lustre on her sex —Lady Sale, his wife."

One of the most adventurous travellers of the present day is the niece of the late Charles Kingsley, Miss Mary Kingsley, who has twice been to West Africa to study the habits and customs of the natives, and to collect piscatorial specimens. In exploring the Gorilla country in the Gaboon territory, and in making the ascent of the Cameroons

Peak, which is 13,700 feet high, Miss Kingsley traversed parts which are considered very dangerous and where many lives have been lost. She also explored long stretches of perfectly unknown ground. There were perils of various sorts to be encountered from the nature of the country and the character of the natives. In canoeing among the rapids of the Ogowe river Miss Kingsley was several times upset, and only saved herself by clinging to the rocks. She had to sleep in the open air in heavy rains, and she encountered cannibals who wanted to kill and eat her elephant men, besides Gorillas and other hostile tribes.

Not deterred, however, by hardships and risks, Miss Kingsley is about to make a third visit to Africa to explore other districts. She has made a large collection of specimens, and has kept a careful record of her travels.

CHAPTER IV.

EDUCATIONAL ADVANCE.

Modern methods in women's education compared with the past—A French author's opinion of education in England—Some causes of progress—Character of the new education—The days of Mary Somerville and Caroline Herschell—Their election as members of the Astronomical Society—Mrs. Somerville's education—Opening of Queen's College—Origin of Girton—Foundation of Newnham—Character of modern education.

THE latter years of the present century have witnessed a complete change in the methods of girls' education. Those who have been born under the new order of things can hardly realize how differently matters were arranged in the days of their grandmothers, when French, dancing, flower-painting, and music comprised a young lady's accomplishments. In boarding schools there was much use of the back-board, and out-door exercise was confined to a formal promenade, during which the girls were enjoined to hold themselves in a stiff, erect attitude, and keep a regular pace. The fear of singularity which prevented girls from

studying classics and mathematics, and from diving below the surface of knowledge, kept a hold over the mind of the early nineteenth century. The general opinion was that girls did not need to pursue studies, the utility of which in daily life was not obvious. Female education was conducted on the supposition that all girls would become wives and mothers, and that much time spent on intellectual pursuits was not merely wasted, but tended to unfit them for domestic functions, was, indeed, an obstacle to matrimony. In the higher classes the claims of society, in the middle ranks the claims of the household, regulated the amount and quality of the education. Only those who looked forward to earning their living as governesses were encouraged to pursue a more thorough course of study, and even they did not attempt the solid branches of learning, but gave their time to superficial acquirements rather than to an enlargement of the mental outlook.

And yet England was ahead of France and other countries in the matter of female education in the eyes of that observant Frenchman, Ferri de St. Constant, who writes in 1804—

"Quelques reproches qu'on puisse faire au système adopté en Angleterre pour l'éducation des filles, il faut avouer qu'en général il est bien supérieur à celui qu'on

suit dans d'autres pays. L'inconvenient de leur donner souvent une instruction trop recherchée est sans doute moindre que celui de les élever de manière à donner lieu de croire qu'on craint d'en faire des êtres raisonnables."

What M. de St. Constant meant by the education of English girls being too "*recherchée*" it is difficult to conceive, but it is clear that he thought we erred, if at all, on the side of too much culture.

As the first half of this century drew to a close, a broader view began to be taken of the educational needs of women, arising out of the general forward movement in social life. The new impulse, which wrought a change in both mental and physical training, took some time to germinate. But by degrees the curriculum of study was altered and enlarged. The back-board was given up for the gymnasium, the daily walk exchanged sometimes for an hour in the tennis-court. More has been done for women's education during the last thirty years than was accomplished throughout the whole of the eighteenth century, in spite of its great literary movement.

It is not an intellectual force alone which has caused such marked progress in women's education. If intellectual force by itself were sufficient, the women of Greece in the days of Plato would have been drawn into the current of thought, and not

have been left in the ignorant seclusion of the *gynæcium.* The women of England in the literary eighteenth century would have entered upon a new era, instead of being regarded as singular and eccentric if they ventured out of the educational rut. The force which uprose in the nineteenth century was of a composite character. In one direction it expended itself in the humanitarian movement; in another, in the awakening life in the Church; in another, in the development of æsthetics; and it may be traced also in the numerous attempts for the betterment of social life.

The wider thought, the more lively sympathies, the juster appreciation of the relative positions of the sexes, the desire to turn to account the latent power of individuals for the benefit of the community, dispelled the mists of error which had clung to popular theories of the domestic life of the nation. These impulses, united to the intellectual movement, set the education of women on a new basis. How much this was needed may be gathered from a remark made by Buckle, who expressed the opinion that the thinking process was quicker in women than in men.

"Nothing," he says, "could prevent its being universally admitted except the fact that the remarkable rapidity with which women think is obscured by that miserable, that

contemptible, that preposterous system called their education, in which valuable things are carefully kept from them, and trifling things carefully taught to them, until their fine and nimble minds are too often irretrievably injured." *

The characteristic of the new education was its greater thoroughness. It looked more carefully to the foundations. The valuable things were revealed and the trifling things put aside. Better methods calculated to awaken the mental powers were substituted for the old parrot-like system which cultivated a merely verbal memory. It is, of course, just as likely that classics, science, or mathematics will be studied superficially as anything else. Indeed there is a strong tendency to prick the surface of subjects that demand close and continued application. Every department of knowledge is now so accessible. Nothing is sacred from the crammer with his primers and text-books. But although many are satisfied with hastily acquired half-knowledge, there is a great improvement in the general estimate of what is essential to a woman's education. The standard is higher. The sham scholar is detected at once, and has no chance of practising an imposture.

Reference has already been made to the fact that England was regarded as advanced, in comparison with other nations, at the beginning of the

* "Influence of Women on the Progress of Knowledge."

century, as far as concerned women's education. After the lapse of thirty years, matters seem to have been no better in France, and it is doubtful whether the condemnation contained in the following remarks was not intended to apply to Europe generally :—

"Or, sous tous les rapports, on doit considérer l'éducation des femmes comme détestable ; et si cette éducation est cause qu'elles exercent une fâcheuse influence sur les mœurs, réciproquement les mœurs exercent sur elles la plus pernicieuse influence. . . . Voici comment on les élève : la première habitude qu'on leur donne est celui de la mollesse et de l'oisiveté ; l'instruction dont on les nourrit est étroite, tronquée, et superficielle ; les goûts qu'on entretient sont ceux de la parure et des plaisirs du monde ; et l'esprit qu'on leur inspire est toujours un esprit d'irréflexion et de frivolité ; on oublie le fond pour ne songer qu'à la forme. . . . Tout est faux et contradictoire dans l'éducation des femmes. On les instruit de choses de pure spéculation, et on leur laisse entièrement ignorer le monde et ses difficultés, la vie et ses douleurs ; on les berce dans le luxe, comme si la fortune devait toujours leur sourire ; on étouffe leur energie, comme si le malheur ne devait jamais se dresser contre elles ; on retient le développement de leur intelligence, comme si la raison ne devait jamais leur être nécessaire." *

It was just at this period, which seemed so unpropitious to the educational advancement of women

* "De la Condition Sociale des Femmes." *Revue Encyclopédique*, 1832.

generally, that Mary Somerville and Caroline Herschell were reaping the reward of their talent and industry. In 1835 they were both elected members of the Astronomical Society. In a report containing the recommendation, the council of the Society made some observations relative to the position of women which are worth recording. The report runs:—

"Your Council has no small pleasure in recommending that the names of two ladies, distinguished in different walks of astronomy, be placed on the list of honorary members. On the propriety of such a step, in an astronomical point of view, there can be but one voice: and your Council is of opinion that the time is gone by when either feeling or prejudice, by whichever name it may be proper to call it, should be allowed to interfere with the payment of a well-earned tribute of respect. Your Council has hitherto felt that, whatever might be its own sentiment on the subject, or however able and willing it might be to defend such a measure, it had no right to place the name of a lady in a position the propriety of which might be contested, though upon what it might consider narrow grounds and false principles. But your Council has no fear that such a difference could now take place between any men whose opinion would avail to guide that of society at large, and abandoning compliments on the one hand and false delicacy on the other, submits that while the tests of astronomical merit should in no case be applied to the works of a woman less severely than to those of a man, the sex of the former should no longer be an obstacle to

her receiving any acknowledgment which might be held due to the latter. And your Council, therefore, recommends this meeting to add to the list of honorary members the names of Miss Caroline Herschell and Mrs Somerville, of whose astronomical knowledge, and of the utility of the ends to which it has been applied, it is not necessary to recount the proofs."

The council were a-head of their day in deeming that—

"the time had gone by when either feeling or prejudice . . . should be allowed to interfere with the payment of a well-earned tribute of respect."

Only in 1893 the Royal Geographical Society refused to allow certain ladies to become fellows on the plea of sex simply. Mr. G. N. Curzon, M.P., described the proposal as—

"part of the general movement to break down the natural barriers between the two sexes. These steps in the direction of the so-called 'emancipation' of women would not be so much injurious to men as disastrous to women." *

When it came to the voting there were 158 for the ladies; against, 172.

Any one who thinks of the mental pabulum provided in the best girls' schools fifty or sixty years ago cannot fail to be struck with the complete

* *The Times*, July 4, 1893.

change that has taken place in the form of education, and the much wider range which the school course now covers. For the old system of learning by rote has been substituted the lecture, which is a better stimulant to thought, and a readier means of conveying knowledge. Science, which was formerly tabooed, now forms part of the every-day curriculum; to the study of English literature, into the early history of which girls were never encouraged to wander, has been added philology. The origin and growth of our language was not thought a matter which it concerned girls to know. Very few were taught Latin, even as a stepping-stone to other languages, and Greek was practically unknown in girls' colleges and schools. Avenues of knowledge which it is now deemed essential to tread were shut to girls unless they belonged to exceptionally enlightened families.

The celebrated Mrs. Somerville, when she was Mary Fairfax, timidly consulted Professor Playfair if a woman might, without impropriety, learn Latin, as she wished to study the *Principia*. The professor gravely replied that it would not do her any harm to learn Latin for such a purpose. The lack of training from which Mrs. Somerville suffered was never completely got over, even by her exceptional ability. It was apparent in her work,

"The Mechanism of the Heavens," in which those who admitted to the full the value of the matter, perceived a want of preciseness in terms and a general looseness of language which, though not a hindrance to advanced students, would be liable to cause beginners to err. The book, it must be remembered, was intended for popular use. Mrs. Somerville's parents, like others of their day, were afraid of close, systematic study of difficult subjects for their girls. Writing in later years, Mrs. Somerville says that she pursued her studies as well as her domestic tasks permitted, one of these being to work samplers. When Mary began to show signs of rapid advance in mathematics, Admiral Fairfax said to his wife, "Peg, we must put a stop to this, or we shall have Mary in a strait-jacket one of these days."

At the present day everything is open; there are no gates shut in the realm of learning. All who will can enter. Although this great gain has been to some extent minimized by haste, pressure, and the distraction caused by having many subjects presented to the mind at once, the winning of mental freedom counterbalances all disadvantages.

In treating of the education and opportunities of past days, regard must be paid to the general standard and the usually accepted estimate of

women's intellectual needs. That there were many women highly educated, in the best sense of the word, without the aid of lectures and examinations, or the stimulus of competing for University honours, is undeniable. But they were usually brought up by scholarly parents, who possessed well-stocked libraries, which they did not keep under lock and key. The merit of the present age lies much in the attitude which it takes towards education. Sex is not an excuse for lack of thoroughness. Women are expected to be as patient and painstaking in their pursuit of knowledge as men, if they pretend to be students at all.

The first attempt to give a wider scope to women's education was when Queen's College was opened in 1848. It is a curious coincidence that the year of political upheaval all over Europe should see the commencement of an educational revolution in England. Queen's College grew out of the Governesses' Benevolent Institution, the idea being that to teach the teachers was the first essential step in educational reform. But the college was open to all comers, and was not a mere training ground for teachers. The name of Frederick Denison Maurice must always be honoured as that of a pioneer in the promotion of the higher education of women. The methods of

teaching in the new college excited hostile comment from contemporary writers, and Maurice defended with great earnestness the system adopted by himself and his brother professors, who all came from King's College.

The educational advantages offered by Queen's College were unprecedented, and the fees were low. Some of the best teaching work of the present day has been done by women who were students at Queen's College. Its influence has been widespread, and it has done much to raise the standard of proficiency.

"The distinguishing features in a man's education," wrote Bebel, "are the strengthening of the understanding, the sharpening of the powers of thought, the extension of knowledge, the acquisition of scientific facts and methods, in short, the development of the functions of the mind. The education of a woman, on the other hand, when it deserves the name at all, concerns itself with the purely external cultivation of the feelings. . . . The results are overstrung sensitiveness, nervous irritability, and a heightened imagination, the product of music, light literature, art, and poetry."

Twenty years passed over before any attempt was made to enable women to enter upon a regular University career. In 1856 Miss Jessie Meriton White was vainly applying for admittance to the matriculation examination of London University in

order to prepare for a medical training. In 1869, through the efforts mainly of Mme. Bodichon (Barbara Leigh Smith) and Miss Emily Davies, a college for women on University lines was opened at Hitchin. This was the origin of Girton College, the building of which cost £14,700. Accommodation was provided for twenty-one students, but since then the building has been enlarged. Girton was opened in 1873, having been incorporated in 1872. In 1895 there were seventy-one students in residence. The plan of study was modelled on that of Cambridge University, for it was one of the objects of the founders to prove women's fitness for pursuing the same studies as men.

Newnham College, built by the Association for Promoting the Higher Education of Women, followed in 1875. It is arranged on a less expensive scale, and possesses the advantage of being situated within the City of Cambridge, instead of two miles out in the country like Girton. The number of students past and present is 999.

Among other objections urged against women following a University career has been the theory that what is suitable for men cannot be suitable for women, who ought to avoid certain lines of study, and not entrench upon the prerogative of the stronger sex. It has been held by many persons

that women are not free to enter into the whole wide field of learning, but should keep to the paths assigned them by theory. This is really a modern notion. In the sixteenth century more liberal ideas prevailed. Women who had any capacity for scholarship enjoyed the whole range of knowledge. The means of study were difficult, the methods dry, and books few, but all available avenues of learning were open to women as a matter of course, though it was only the upper classes who received any education worth speaking of—certainly very few outside their ranks could be described as scholars.

In secondary education no single individual has done so much for girls during the last three or four decades as the late Frances Mary Buss. Through her organizing and business capacity she raised the private school which she started in the north of London to such a degree of efficiency, that when the Brewers' Company desired to invest a sum of money for the promotion of girls' education, they entered into negotiations with Miss Buss, acquired her undertaking, and retained her as the head-mistress. Miss Buss imparted to her system of education what had so generally been lacking in the training of girls—method and point. No one was allowed to drift. A definite end was always kept in view. Her main injunction to a departing

pupil was to adopt a career in life, and if in response to the question, "Now, my dear, what are you going to do?" the student could reply that she was about to follow some new profession for women, such as dentistry or dispensing, great was Miss Buss's delight.

The High-school system, which has grown up during the last quarter of a century, has, in spite of its defects, done much to improve the education of the middle classes. It has introduced the cramming system, but it has also put sound instruction within the reach of numbers who would otherwise have been left without any mental discipline worth the name.

The middle classes are now able to enjoy what was formerly confined to the aristocracy. The curriculum is more varied in the present day, but the study is not more profound than in the sixteenth century. The modern girl graduate reads her Plato—with the help of the best notes; so did Lady Jane Grey, but without the notes. To Lady Jane, Plato was a delightful recreation; to the Girton girl, Plato is one of the authors she has to "get up" for the approaching examination.

The comparison is favourable to the earlier period. Women studied then in a higher and more appreciative spirit. They were not haunted by thoughts of "passes," and could afford to ponder

over the philosophy of the ancient sages, to weigh their meaning as well as master the construction of intricate passages. There was no cramming of certain portions of an author's works in a given time. The study itself was the end; there were no rewards in view but those that come from the acquisition of knowledge.

Excellent and valuable as has been the example of the court and royal family during the Victorian era in regard to the appreciation of literature and art, the movement in favour of the higher education of women is not due to individual influence, but is the result of a general progressive movement among the leisured classes. Sovereigns may advance or retard such movements; private individuals may give voice to the general sentiment; when the time is ripe the man or the woman appears. They seem to lead; in reality they are being led, unconsciously, by a subtle stirring in the national life. The quickly responsive natures are the pioneers in social movements—those whose minds stretch out to meet the slowly growing thought, who feel the first faint breath of the new force. The educational movement forms part of the general evolution in the history of women in England, and cannot be considered as a thing of independent origin and growth.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

CHAPTER V.

WOMEN IN LITERATURE.

The branches of literature in which women have been most distinguished—The first professional woman writer—Influence of public sentiment—Position of literary women in the eighteenth century—Anecdote by Lord Granville—Influence of women in literature—The new school of fiction—Rapid advance of women in all branches of literature.

In considering women's place in literature it will be necessary to limit the subject to one or two main points, and to indicate these very briefly. It would be beyond the scope and beside the purpose of this book to give sketches of the leading writers and describe the nature of their works. This would lead to nothing less than a survey of the whole literary history of England during the last two hundred years. Without giving biographical details or entering into an academic discussion of literary questions, some idea may be gathered of the position of women in relation to literature by noting the branches

in which they have been most distinguished, the general estimate in which their works have been held, the rapid advance which they have made along various paths of literature during the present century, and the influence of public sentiment on woman's literary career.

There is no difficulty in determining the first point. Women have excelled more in fiction than in any other branch of literature. The number of eminent novelists far exceeds the number of eminent writers in any other department. This applies not only to the present day, but is equally true of the last century. Indeed, it was as writers of fiction or romance that women first entered the field of literature. Although even in Saxon times England could boast of women of learning, there are but scanty records of their contributions to literature before the middle of the seventeenth century. The devotional writings and the translations from the classics which were produced by women in the Elizabethan period are valuable as evidences of the soundness of education among the upper classes, and the high standard of scholarship attained, but they hardly afford a starting-point from which to consider women's place in literature. Those writers did not seek the suffrages of the general public, and their works

were little known except among scholars. There were few women among the poets or prose writers of Tudor times whose works have attained celebrity.

The temper of a nation may be gauged by its literature. The seventeenth century was neither a studious nor a poetic age. What it liked was to be amused, shocked, excited. Plays on and off the stage were popular, less on account of the beauty or depth of their sentiment than because they appealed to the passions and tickled the fancy by treating vice as a subject of mirth. The English novel was in a very early stage of its growth, but there was a widespread taste for anything which savoured of the make-believe. It was in prose romance that the first woman who made a living by her pen achieved celebrity. Mrs. Aphra Behn's plays are pretty well forgotten, but her novel "Oronooko," written at the request of Charles II., still holds its place in the annals of literature. It may be remarked in passing that the purpose of Mrs. Behn's novel was the same as that which, a couple of hundred years later, inspired Mrs. Beecher-Stowe to the composition of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

The women writers in the seventeenth century who practised other forms of literature only achieved temporary fame. The poems and letters

of the Duchess of Newcastle, who received such extravagant praise in her day; those of the "Matchless Orinda," who was admired by Cowley; the tragedy, "Mariam," by Lady Elizabeth Carew, and the compositions of serious writers like Mary Astell, Elizabeth Lamond, and Elizabeth Elstob, have all passed into the limbo of obscurity.

When we come to the eighteenth century it is again in fiction that women writers have held their place. There are but few historians, dramatists, essayists, poetesses, and none who can compare in celebrity or popularity with the romance writers. Catherine Macaulay, Eliza Heywood, and Elizabeth Carter have almost ceased to be read, while Fanny Burney, Mrs. Inchbald, and Mrs. Radcliffe are still in every circulating library.

In the present century the prominent place to which women have attained as novelists is still more striking. Between Jane Austen and Mrs. Humphry Ward is one long roll of fame, in which great names, like that of George Eliot, stand out in letters of gold. There is no class of fiction which women have not attempted—novels of incident, novels of character, novels of domestic life, the historical romance, the society novel, the novel with a didactic purpose, the novel of adventure—all are to be found in the list of women s

productions; and, what is more, many of the best works in every branch of fiction are the works of women. The novelists present a solid phalanx, which is being daily recruited. The number of distinguished women writers in other departments of literature rather serves to emphasize than to weaken the contention that women have found in fiction their most successful field of action.

It may be convenient here to note the rapid advance that women have made in literature all along the line, especially during the last half-century. There are but few departments to which they have not contributed a large amount of noteworthy work. We have, it is true, no great historians, but there are many who have assisted largely in providing material for history by specializing certain phases and periods of social life, and by the writing of biography. In poetry and in dramatic literature women, again, have not progressed as they have in prose, whether from lack of imaginative and creative power, or because they have not seen and felt enough of life, which Lord Byron declared to be the reason why women did not write good tragedy. As translators, editors, compilers, as writers on social subjects and questions of the day, in educational literature, in the writing of memoirs and travels, and in literary studies, they

compete with the best workers. Besides the purely literary women, we have the enormous band of journalists and magazine writers, among whom there is a goodly sprinkling of editors.

The influence of public sentiment has largely affected women's position in literature. In the last century it was adverse to women following a literary career. Lady Mary Montagu, when she was in Italy in 1753, was a little confused at first by the compliments which she received on her books, and attempted to deny her authorship, until she realized that in that country women writers were held in high esteem, and that the greatest families were proud of possessing an authoress. She writes in her usual caustic vein of the hindrances put in the way of women following intellectual pursuits in England:

"We are educated in the grossest ignorance, and no art omitted to stifle our natural reason; if some few get above their nurses' instructions, our knowledge must be concealed and be as useless to the world as gold in the mine. I am now speaking according to our English notions, which may wear out some ages hence, along with others equally absurd. It appears to me the clearest proof of a clear understanding in Longinus, when I find him so far superior to vulgar prejudices as to choose his two examples of fine writing from a Jew and a woman. Our modern wits would be so far from quoting, they would

scarce own they had read the works of such contemptible creatures, though perhaps they would condescend to steal from them at the same time they declared they were below their notice." *

Literary women were looked upon as abnormal creatures whose example was to be shunned. It was thought unnatural that woman should devote herself to literature as a profession. Any marked taste or aptitude for learning she might show was discouraged. It was remarked in the case of Mary Somerville, who was born in 1780—

"if a boy had shown similar fitness for mathematical research, anxious attention would have been devoted to the choice of books and teachers, school and university; but the case of a girl showing such tastes seemed to be adequately met by according to her the privilege of following her own devices." †

Intellectual pursuits were thought unfitted for women; if not positively harmful, they were "unladylike." Women writers were regarded with the same kind of repugnance as a short time ago was felt for women bicyclists and cricketers. There was supposed to be a positive antagonism between women and knowledge.

"A taste for sciences in most women does not come until they have lost every other relish, and, as it is not natural to them, it usually does them more harm than good. Very few of them are made amiable by it, but many have their

* "Letters," vol. ii. † *Fortnightly Review*, 1873.

brains turned, and are exposed by it to the laughter of reasonable persons of both sexes. A woman who thro' misfortune falls into this absurdity makes herself insupportable by that air of sufficiency which she assumes on all occasions without perceiving it. She seems always in astonishment at what she knows, tho' her pretended knowledge is commonly what others find less astonishing than herself." *

It will be remembered how Fanny Burney feared to acknowledge the authorship of "Evelina," and protested that she only wrote it as a pastime. An anecdote told by the late Lord Granville shows that the prejudice against women becoming known for their proficiency in letters was strong in cultivated circles in the early part of this century. Speaking in the House of Lords in June, 1890, on the question of women becoming County Councillors, his Lordship said:—

"When I was a boy a great statesman, who has since become a very brilliant man of letters, took his daughter into Devonshire on a visit. On his return to London he received a letter from his hostess, enclosing a copy of verses, and suggesting that very likely the modesty of his daughter had prevented him seeing the copy which she then sent him. The statesman at once sent for his daughter, and criticized the verses, pointing out some unsuitable lines, praising the beauties of others, and on the whole greatly approving of the poem. But having done that, he then appealed to her affection for him, and made a request to

* "Le Blanc," vol. ii.

her never to write verses again. He was not afraid of her becoming a good poetess, but he was afraid of the disadvantages which were likely to be suffered by her if she were supposed to be a lady of literary attainments."

The number of women who have written under pseudonyms, fearing to disclose their sex lest their work should be thereby branded as inferior, is a proof of the power of public sentiment to affect the position of women in literature. The names of Charlotte Brontë and her sisters and of George Eliot will at once occur as examples.

The difficulties that formerly stood in the way of women producing literature which necessitated much research and study of matters foreign to the ordinary feminine curriculum may be one of the reasons why women took so frequently to the writing of fiction, which depends chiefly on imaginative power. Women's position in literature has been largely determined by their surroundings and the conditions of social life. At the present day women are not debarred from any intellectual pursuit by lack of books, or of teachers, or of any of the resources of the student which are open to men, nor are they hindered by a hostile public sentiment. They are free to follow any path in literature for which their abilities fit them. If similar conditions had prevailed earlier the record

of literary achievements would have been more varied. Women would have entered into general literature, as they are doing now, when, although fiction still claims the largest numbers and the greatest names, there is a very steadily increasing body of writers in other departments.

Men and women being now educated on similar lines, and finding a common standing-ground on all intellectual questions, there is less evidence of sex in the works of general literature written by women. In purely literary subjects there is little by which the pen of a woman can be distinguished from that of a man. There are writers who betray their sex in a variety of ways, but it is not due to the subject-matter of their writings. In fiction, however, which is concerned with human feeling, the difference between the point of view of a man and that of a woman is more distinctly marked. Women have contributed certain elements to fiction which are conditioned by sex. Miss Julia Kavanagh remarked, more than thirty years ago, that—

"the character of the English novel has, for the last seventy years, been much modified by what threatens to become an overwhelming influence—woman."

The effect of the in-rush during that period of women into fiction was to make popular the novel of domestic life, and to foster a taste for works

in which the interest was condensed within narrow limits. But in the last twenty-five years the influence of women in literature has shown itself in another direction. We still have in abundance the purely feminine novel of domestic life, but we have also a novel which is feminine in quite another sense—namely, in the manner of treating the deeper problems of life. The relations between the sexes can never appear in precisely the same light to a man and a woman. They approach the subject from an opposite basis. The male novelist views it as one of the great elements of life which may become dramatic, pathetic, or commonplace, according to circumstances. To the woman novelist it is the pivot around which everything turns, the one absorbing problem of existence. This accounts in great measure for the prominence given to social questions in novels written by women. Subjects which are now being discussed without reserve in other prose literature, in the periodical and the daily press, are to women matters of more vital interest than they are to men. Consequently they receive more analytical treatment at their hands.

It might be argued that in all ages human nature is the same, and that the women of this century are in all essentials of feeling the same as the women of last century. But feeling finds a form

of expression in accordance with the sentiment of the times. In Miss Burney's and Miss Austen's days, for instance, the question of an equal moral standard for both sexes, far from coming into the arena of public discussion, was not even raised. Women had not learned to expect equality in morals; the ideal of the age did not demand it. A distinction was drawn between masculine and feminine virtue. The way in which public sentiment on this point influenced fiction may be seen by glancing at the novels of the eighteenth century by the ablest male writers like Fielding.

This is not the place in which to discuss the merits and demerits of the new school of fiction that has been created so largely by women writers. It is a school occupied with politics, economics, and other matters in regard to which the position of women has materially changed. The dissection of emotion and the probing of the labour question are carried on side by side. The next century will be a better judge than the present of the place to be assigned to the novelists of to-day, and will see with clearer eyes which are the faults that belong to the age, and which are the shortcomings of the individual. A number of women are now drawn into literature by their apprenticeship to the Press —a training ground only formed within recent

years. The general educational advance has also developed among women a great deal of serviceable ability which in former days would have lain unused for want of cultivation. If the competition in literature is greater, the opportunities for writers are enormously multiplied.

Women stand on an equality with men as regards the general estimation in which their works are held. Books are judged on their own merits without reference to the sex of the writer. Woman is expected to hold her own in all branches of literature, and if she fails in any literary undertaking the fault is not ascribed to her sex, but to her limitations as an individual. The position women hold in literature is much affected by the altered conditions of society, which have brought them into the mid-current of life. It is deemed by many people a most regrettable feature of the late nineteenth century that women should either seek or have thrust upon them an unreserved acquaintance with humanity in all its phases. But a writer cannot know too much of life, and if women are to produce literature worthy of the name they must not shrink from any knowledge which will help them to a sounder judgment. They have more to fear from ignorance than from too much light.

CHAPTER VI.

ART AS A PROFESSION.

The stage as a profession for women—The progress of art—Opening of the Royal Academy schools to female students—Society of Lady Artists—Women as musicians—Composers in the first half of the century—Queen Victoria's pianoforte instructress—The musical amateur.

At the present day the difficulties in the way of women who wish to adopt the stage as a profession are nothing like so great as in the last century. There was then far less restraint of manners; it would have been impossible for a gentlewoman to have gone alone to any place of entertainment; women in private life were subject to rudeness in the public streets if unattended; much more were those who catered for the common amusement regarded as fair prey; insults offered to a woman by a man of rank were deemed only gallantries. The freedom allowed to spectators at a theatre was something astonishing. They went freely behind the scenes; they even mingled with the

actors on the stage, paying extra for this privilege. The worst abuses were gradually remedied. Queen Anne, as has been seen, issued edicts for the reformation of the manners of theatre-goers, but much licence was permitted in spite of regulations.

The standard of taste and morals of the present day does not permit scenes of disorder such as were witnessed in the theatres of the last century, and outward respect is shown to the performers on the stage. An actress is in no fear of open molestation, however she may be beset by insidious means. In every respect her position is improved. If her calling brings her into disrepute, it is generally her own fault. A change has come over popular sentiment with regard to the stage. The actor, who was formerly shunned as a Bohemian by the staid middle class, and to whom "society" only condescended occasionally to show marks of favour, is now admired and courted. It is no longer thought a venturesome thing for a girl to go on the stage, nor does she lose caste by so doing; the fear and the contempt have both vanished.

As one result numbers of men and women who would not have cared formerly to face the associations of the theatre now throng the stage as amateurs, greatly to the detriment of the professional performers; and girls and youths who have no special

dramatic talent, but are only "stage struck," take to the boards to their own after disillusionment. It has become so "respectable," in the middle-class acceptation of the word, to be on the stage that women feel as safe there as in any other profession.

In former times men acted women's parts, now women take male characters. Youthful parts, such as pages, are generally played by women, for it is difficult to find a man who combines sufficient experience with suppleness and juvenility of appearance. The development of pantomime and spectacular performances has immensely increased the demand for women and girls on the stage. It has opened out quite a new field for employment. Objection has been raised to the performance of children, who, it is alleged, are exposed to great dangers of all sorts by theatrical life. But the class from which pantomime girls are drawn run similar risks in their own surroundings, and the theatre must be a welcome change from their sordid homes.

In the higher branches of the profession the prizes which fall to really great actresses are larger than ever. The competition all through is severer every day, but the openings are multiplying constantly, for every watering-place and provincial town of note has its theatre. It is curious to look back to the time when women first trod the stage

publicly in England, and compare it with the present day when no piece is played without them.

One circumstance which now tends to attract numbers of women to the stage in the present day is the popularity of a species of domestic drama which does not put a great strain on the histrionic powers. There are thus more openings than formerly for performers who possess adaptability and other minor qualities, but who would fail in enacting a great passion.

With regard to art, the turning point for women was in 1861, when the Royal Academy schools were first opened to women students. Sir Charles Eastlake was President then, and his influence was favourable to the admission of women. The matter came about in this wise: Lord Lyndhurst, in his speech at the annual dinner in 1859, remarked on the benefits conferred upon *all* Her Majesty's subjects by the Academy schools. Thereupon Miss Laura Herford, an artist, wrote to Lord Lyndhurst pointing out that half of Her Majesty's subjects—women—were excluded. This led to a discussion of the question of the propriety of admitting women. Thirty-eight ladies—professional artists—signed a memorial, which was forwarded to every member of the Academy, praying for the admission of women, pointing out the benefit it

would be to them to pursue studies, under qualified teachers, from the antique and from life. The Academy, however, refused the request, on the ground that a separate life school would have to be provided, and for that there was no room. However, the matter did not rest there. There was, in the constitution of the Academy, no law either for or against the admission of women. This was the first time application had been made, and, at the suggestion of Sir Charles Eastlake, Miss Herford sent in a drawing, signed only "L. Herford," and was admitted by letter addressed to "L. Herford, Esq." It then became a question whether a woman, who had been accepted as a man, should be allowed to enter, but the President got his way, and Miss Herford duly took her place in the year 1861. By the next year five more lady students had appeared, and were passed, and in the next ten years forty entered.

Miss Herford, who was a constant exhibitor, died in 1870 at the early age of thirty-nine. She had, before entering the Academy, studied in the sculpture galleries of the British Museum. Miss Herford's niece, Miss Helen Paterson, who lived with her, was also a clever artist, better known as Mrs. Allingham. She was elected Associate of the Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1875.

Although, as every one knows, there have been no lady Associates or Academicians since the days of Angelica Kauffmann and Mary Moser—both, by the way, of foreign birth—there is no law against their election.* The reason for excluding them assigned by Mr. William Sandby, in his "History of the Royal Academy," is lame and insufficient. He says—

"One or two ladies, if elected members, could scarcely be expected to take part in the government or in the work of the society; and as the practice even of giving votes by proxy has long since been abolished, the effect of their election as Royal Academicians would be, virtually, to reduce the number of those who manage the affairs of the institution and the schools in proportion as ladies were admitted to that rank: and as long as the number of Associates is limited, a difficulty would arise in the fact that the higher rank has to be recruited from that body."

The question may fairly be asked why women, if elected as Academicians, should not take part in the government and work of the society? There seems no valid reason for making sex a disqualification in this matter. Mr. Sandby is not ungenerous. He remarks—

"Whether a number of honorary appointments could be made to recognise talent in such cases, but conferring none of the other rights or privileges of membership, is a matter which the Council of the Academy are best able to determine; and there is no doubt from their desire, as far

* Sandby, "History of the Royal Academy of Arts."

as is wise and reasonable, to meet any just demands, that the claims of all artists of ability, whether male or female, will meet with due consideration."

Nothing has been done to remove the disability of sex, and Miss Ellen Clayton is justified in saying that—

"The Academy has studiously ignored the existence of women artists, leaving them to work in the cold shade of utter neglect. Not even once has a helping hand been extended, not once has the most trifling reward been given for highest merit and industry. Accidents made two women Academicians—the accident of circumstances and the accident of birth. Accident opened the door to girl students—accident, aided by courage and talent. In other countries women have the prizes fairly earned quietly placed in their hands, and can receive them with dignity. In free, unprejudiced, chivalric England, where the race is given to the swift, the battle to the strong, without fear or favour, it is only by slow, laborious degrees that women are winning the right to enter the lists at all, and are then received with half-contemptuous indulgence." *

The second half of this century has been very favourable to the cultivation of art by women. The Society of Lady Artists came into existence in 1859, Mrs. Grote and Madame Lind-Goldschmidt, with the help of some other ladies of influence, having given the initiative. The exhibition of the year 1895 is the fortieth that has been

* Ellen Clayton, "English Female Artists."

held. Twice in the Society's history considerable changes have taken place in the management, and it was largely owing to the energy and ability of the late Miss Mary Atkinson, hon. secretary, and the late Miss Ellen Partridge, who in 1885 was elected vice-president, that the institution has been enabled to render services of a very valuable kind to professional lady artists. It was in its galleries that Lady Butler, then Miss Elizabeth Thompson, first exhibited, while in them have also been seen pictures by Rosa Bonheur.

Art schools have multiplied, and the facilities for obtaining instruction and viewing the best work are abundant. Every chance is afforded to budding talent, or the kindling of any latent spark of genius. Amid the mass of mediocre ability thus developed, power that can show itself above the general level needs to be exceptional. A glance at the various exhibitions will show how large is the number of professional women artists at the present day whose work calls for notice. Women work in all departments of art — landscape and portrait painting, flowers; and in all media—oil, water-colour, and pastel. Very few have taken to animal painting, and the lady whose magnificent productions appear so often on the walls of English exhibitions—Rosa Bonheur—we cannot claim as a countrywoman.

As for amateurs, their name is legion. There is nothing so easy as one of the imitative arts for women to take up as a pastime. Many amateurs are very serious students, and fully competent to meet the professionals on their own ground. In the kindred branches, such as china-painting and other decorative work, women have made great progress. Clever artists work at designing wall-papers and carpet patterns, and even compose the advertisements which announce a new soap or a new beverage. Book-illustrating, also, which was neglected by women in the past, is now much followed, and the various processes recently invented for purposes of illustration have caused this branch of art to develop with great rapidity. The number of great artists among Englishwomen is still few, whether owing to lack of creative power or from some other cause. But the capacity for producing work which, if not the result of genius, shows well-directed talent, is greater than ever, and is being fostered by the diffusion of culture and art-knowledge, which has raised the standard of taste and requirements in the humbler forms of art.

Early in the eighteenth century we begin to find women achieving fame as opera singers and on concert platforms, where they often began their

professional careers. At that time the pianoforte did not occupy a very important place. Its literature was very scanty: the great composers—Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Chopin—were yet to come. The instrument itself, in its early form of clavecin and harpsichord, was poor in comparison with the modern pianoforte. As for keyless stringed instruments and wind instruments, they were not thought suitable for a woman, so it was as a vocalist that she first took her place among musical executants. Among the names of Italian singers, here and there we find one of our own countrywomen. Katherine Tofts, Anastasia Robinson (for many years secretly married to the Earl of Peterborough), and Lavinia Fenton (afterwards Duchess of Bolton), all made their *débuts* in opera during the first thirty years of the century. Lavinia Fenton was the heroine of *The Beggar's Opera*, about which all London went mad. Afterwards we come to other names famous in their day, but now forgotten, till we arrive at those of Catherine Hayes and Louisa Pyne, whose performances are still remembered by those whose recollections can take them back into the forties.

"The history of the opera in England is nothing but a narrative of feuds and cabals between singers, foreign composers, and managers," writes

Dr. Frederick Louis Ritter.* Musical biographies and recollections of the celebrated foreign artists who found the English public so ready to hear them will afford an insight into their cabals. They do not concern the relation of the women of this country to musical art, for the operatic stage has been practically in possession of Continentals, chiefly Italians.

Between the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth we find the names of some women composers. Mrs. Beardman, whose father was an oboe player, filled the triple part of composer, singer, and pianist. She made her *début* as a singer at the Gloucester Festival of 1790. Her compositions were chiefly glees and pianoforte sonatas. The sisters Ann and Elizabeth Mounsey were both composers, Ann being the more distinguished. She attracted Spohr's notice by her precocity in 1820, when she was only nine years old. Her compositions were somewhat ambitious, and she ranks high among female composers. In 1855 her oratorio, *The Nativity*, was produced by Hullah in London. She also wrote a sacred cantata and part songs. In 1855 she married Mr. Bartholomew. She was organist at three London churches, an Associate

* "History of Music."

of the Philharmonic Society, and a Member of the Royal Society of Musicians.

A very clever student of the Royal Academy of Music in the thirties and forties was Kate Fanny Loder. One of her instructors was Mrs. Lucy Anderson, pianoforte teacher to Queen Victoria when she was princess, and afterwards to Her Majesty's children. Mrs. Anderson was the first lady pianist to appear at the Philharmonic Society's concerts. Her apt pupil, Miss Loder, was a King's Scholar at the Royal Academy, and when in 1844, at the age of eighteen, after five years' tuition, she ceased to be a student, she was appointed professor of harmony at her *alma mater*. She had studied composition with Charles Lucas. Her compositions include an opera, an overture, two string quartets, two pianoforte sonatas, a sonata for violin and piano, and some pianoforte studies.

Another gifted composer was Eliza Flower, who lived in the early part of the century. She wrote several hymn tunes, and organized the musical service at the Finsbury Unitarian Chapel. Her sister, Mrs. Adams, wrote the words of the hymn, "Nearer, my God, to Thee."

As song-writers women have achieved some distinction in the present century. An immense popularity was gained for the songs by Claribel

(Mrs. Barnard) and Virginia Gabriel, which, though not of a very high order, fulfilled a useful function in providing "drawing-room music" twenty or thirty years ago. The song-writers of the present day are very numerous, song-writing being the form of composition most easily compassed, and for which there is the largest demand.

At the same time it should be noted how much more attention is now given to the study of harmony by women. It has become a regular part of musical education, whereas formerly the amateur was not supposed to require any knowledge of the laws governing the art. The female students at the various musical institutions show great aptitude for the science of harmony, and at any rate in that stage of their career are quite on an equality with the male candidates, as the examination results testify. Whether this increased attention to the groundwork of the art, and the facilities afforded by the existence of so many excellent centres of musical education, will result in the development of female composers in the higher branches, time only can show. Here and there a concerted piece issues from a woman's pen, and receives recognition, but very few women devote themselves to the more complex forms of composition.*

* In 1895 a Symphony in D, composed by Miss Helen Edith Green, was performed in London by a full orchestra.

Although we have in England the best performances given anywhere, and, as has been said, more good music is heard in London from January to December than in any other European capital, we are, as a nation, still very backward in production; and, judging by the example of the last century, when we enjoyed exceptional advantages in the way of fine representations, we are likely to remain so. Listening is a stimulus to exertion and an education to the taste, but it cannot give creative power.

One word may be said on behalf of that much-abused person, the musical amateur.

"For the woman of refined musical taste and cultivation, who has no occasion to resort to music as a profession, there yet remains a *rôle* of no common influence" (says Madame Raymond Ritter), "the *rôle* of the amateur."

It is, she considers, a *rôle* specially fitted to a cultivated woman. "Where largely appreciative amateur taste exists, it is accompanied by great artistic productivity." The intelligent woman amateur is "the best of mediators between the artists and the public."

CHAPTER VII.

THE GENTLEWOMAN IN TRADE.

The old idea of a gentlewoman—Change in public sentiment—New openings for women—Women as telegraph clerks—Women in the post-office—Indignation of the male clerks—Dame Willatt and the Manchester post-office—Female clerks in the Bank of England—The gentlewoman in trade—Greater freedom enjoyed by women in choice of occupation.

It was not until the second half of this century that the gentlewoman obtained that social enfranchisement which enabled her to break through custom and prejudice, and seek occupation and a livelihood in other than the well-worn paths which, for a long period, seemed the only ones she could possibly tread. The "gentlewoman in trade" would formerly have been considered a contradiction in terms. Of all the social axioms none was more universally accepted than that trade and a gentleman were incapable of union. And if trade would sully a gentleman, how much more would it derogate from the dignity of a gentlewoman? Subtle distinctions were made

between employments of the same nature in order to get rid of the stigma of trade. An office, whatever the nature of the business transacted, took precedence over a shop. Between wholesale and retail was a great gulf.

As for women, it was held to be a misfortune for them to be obliged to work. That they should ever prefer to do so was a notion too ridiculous to be entertained, and was treated with the same incredulous scorn which greeted a woman's declared preference for single rather than married life. Considering the nature of the only occupation open to them, this was not surprising. There was nothing that a gentlewoman could do except become a governess or a companion, for which she received poor pay, and was treated too often with scant courtesy. There were no clerkships open, no Civil Service appointments, no journalistic or literary employment—except for the few who could do original work—no secretaryships, or any of the occupations which have been made available within the last quarter of a century in connection with various social movements. It was certainly a doleful prospect which was presented to the penniless woman trained to nothing except to habits of refinement. But as the need for women to find employment grew greater, as the system

of education altered, and high schools and competitive examinations brought in more democratic ideas, a change came over public sentiment. It was gradually discovered that girls could do many things of which before they had not been deemed capable, or which had been considered unfitting for them. There are now upwards of a hundred and sixty women engaged as commercial travellers.

The electric telegraph opened up quite a new field for numbers of young women, especially in its application to journalism. The first employment of women as telegraph clerks was in 1854. Parliament was prorogued on September 2nd, and the Queen's Speech was telegraphed to the Continent by girls, under the superintendence of a woman telegraphist, at the rate of thirty-five words a minute, the whole being transmitted to the Continent *viâ* the Hague in twenty minutes. The *Athenæum* remarked—

"Why should not women be employed in other analogous cases—for example, in letter sorting? . . . Girls who could transmit thirty-five words a minute by electric telegraph, would soon outstrip the lads whom we now employ sorting letters. The sorting of sixty letters a minute is, we believe, the greatest feat of dexterity they can accomplish." *

This was one of the most important openings for women, and proved of the greatest assistance to

* "Life of John Francis, Publisher of the *Athenæum*."

the necessitous among middle-class families. The Government bought the telegraphs from the Telegraph Company in 1870, and the officials necessarily became Civil servants. It happened that some of these officials were women. In the same year the Clearing House branch was formed. The Postmaster-General, writing in 1871, bears testimony to the efficiency of the women employed. He says—

"From the first day of the transfer of the telegraphs from private companies to the Post Office, the Department entered on the experiment of employing a mixed staff of male and female officers, and there has been no reason to regret the experiment. On the contrary, it has afforded much ground for believing that, where large numbers of persons are employed, with full work and fair supervision, the admixture of the sexes involves no risk, but is highly beneficial. It raises the tone of the male staff by confining them during many hours of the day to a decency of conversation and demeanour which is not always to be found where men alone are employed. Further, it is a matter of experience that the male clerks are more willing to help the female clerks with their work than to help each other; and that on many occasions pressure of business is met and difficulties overcome through this willingness and cordial co-operation." *

There was a great outburst of indignation among the male staff when it was proposed in 1872 to introduce forty women into the Savings Bank

* Quoted in the *Woman's Suffrage Journal*, Oct. 1872.

Department. The men rose *en masse*, held an indignation meeting, and struck such terror into the authorities that they abandoned the attempt. There were sharp comments in the press on the patent injustice of the case. Women were then not only working with great success in other departments of the General Post-office, but were doing kindred work in various places—in banks, savings banks, hotels, and post-offices—and not by any means always in subordinate positions. Three years later, however, the change was effected. In July, 1875, thirty women were engaged as clerks in the Savings Bank Department, under the charge of a lady superintendent. This number has since increased to six hundred and seventy, the clerks in this department taking the higher clerical duties which it had been previously considered impossible for women to perform. In addition to this staff one hundred and eighty sorters are employed, this being a new class of labour introduced entirely by the late Henry Fawcett, through whose agency the employment of women in the Post-office was greatly extended in all directions. In 1881 the Postal Order branch was established.

In connection with the work of the Post-office, it is interesting to recall the state of things in the Manchester Post-office in the last century, as

described by Mr. Herbert Joyce.* In 1792 all the post-office business was conducted by an aged widow, Dame Willatt, and her daughter, and a single letter-carrier. The post-office in 1893 was employing fourteen hundred persons. In some country districts women are still employed to deliver letters. At Penzance all the letter carrying used to be performed by stalwart Cornish women, who were the pride of the town.

In the departments of the public service, exclusive of the postal and telegraphic branches, women have, until quite recently, been but tentatively employed. Within the last two years the few women engaged by some heads of departments as typists have been given the *status* of Civil Servants, but they are still only appointed by selection, not by open competition; their number is very small, and the authorities do not hold out any likelihood of it ever becoming considerable.

In the course of the year 1894, ladies to the number of twenty-five were received as clerks in the Bank of England. Their special department is counting and registering bank notes, old and new. All candidates must procure a nomination from one of the directors, a certain number of places being reserved for the families of the male clerks employed.

* "History of the Post-office."

There is an entrance examination, except for those who have passed the Oxford or Cambridge Local, and resignation must follow in the case of marriage.

With the exception, then, of certain great public departments, the female clerk may be said to be everywhere — in the postal service, in insurance companies, on the railroads, in large houses of business, in the offices of societies of every kind, not to mention the workers in inferior posts, such as cashiers in restaurants, and "counter women" in post-offices. The great social movements, philanthropic and religious, are largely officered by women. Fifty years ago it would have been thought unseemly for young women to be travelling to and fro every day at hours when railway carriages and omnibuses are largely occupied by men. That they would run the chance of being jostled by crowds on platforms and at street corners, would have been a sufficient barrier to their undertaking work outside the home, even had the opportunity offered. But no one now sees anything noticeable in a gentlewoman going from end to end of London alone. The security with which young women can travel both at home and abroad shows how much we have improved on the manners of the last century.

The female clerk, however, is only one type of worker among gentlewomen. Trade, the scorn of

the scorners, the unspeakable thing, has been taken up by those who belong, by birth and education, to the leisured classes. They open shops, superintend the business personally, take an active share in all the operations, even to serving customers, trying on bonnets, the making of which they have supervised, taking orders, and retailing articles large and small. Family losses, unsound investments, unfortunate marriages, have driven many to seek a livelihood in the commercial world. Sometimes they are urged thereto by a superabundance of energy, which cannot find outlet in the social round. There is a good deal of business instinct in women, in spite of all that has been said about their lack of precision and accuracy, and their general ignorance of all that concerns money-making. Though few have built up fortunes like Mrs. Frank Leslie, there are women who have been very successful in commercial undertakings, and made a competence entirely by their own energy, without training or capital.

The gentlewoman in trade has secured her position. She is not cut by her acquaintances, who, on the contrary, are generally ready to support her by talking of her enterprise if they do nothing else. A great deal of gratuitous advertising goes on among women, who enjoy being able to tell

their friends that Mrs. —— has "gone in for" upholstery or millinery, or Japanese ware or artistic furniture. The acquaintances of the lady in question are perfectly ready to go to her shop or show-rooms, and if she waits upon them herself they think it quite delightful. She is welcomed at afternoon teas as a fresh flavour to the entertainment. Sometimes she is interviewed by journalists, and asked to recount her experiences, and she is generally besieged by acquaintances eager to know "how it is done."

We are now so used to the gentlewoman in trade that she has almost ceased to be an interesting novelty. Among certain circles she would still excite wonderment, and possibly suspicion, but generally speaking she is accepted as a *fin-de-siècle* product without question. She has not had the same struggle for recognition as the literary woman, because the times were riper for new developments in social life. The altered views of society are nowhere so strikingly exemplified as in its estimate of what is fitting as a career for women. During the last twenty years custom has allowed women a great deal more liberty of choice in the matter of occupation. And the liberty has been extended to all classes. In the lower ranks the main difficulty has been, and still is, competition. It is in the middle classes that there is the most prejudice to

be encountered. As long as women contend only for inferior positions little objection is made. No one protests against their serving in shops and show-rooms, or behind counters and bars. The inferior class of workers are allowed a comparatively free course. It is for them a struggle with economic rather than social conditions. But it is otherwise with women who seek higher employments. They do not get unqualified support from their own sex. It is true that the way has been to a certain extent prepared for them; the commercial road has been made a little easier to traverse by pioneers in other paths. But, although they are accepted by society, the business world still looks askance at them. It has little faith in the solidity or persistence of an enterprise managed by women. Experience has not been large enough as yet to counterbalance the distrust inspired by generations of prejudice. But it is a step gained that a gentlewoman can engage in trade and still remain a gentlewoman. Formerly custom set up a different standard of gentility for men and women. Work which was a man's honour was a slur upon a woman. She forfeited small courtesies and attentions by earning her living. Work, if done by a woman, became something ignoble, unless it were useless work which helped no one, not even herself. This feeling was

responsible for much of the dilettanteism of women's methods of occupation.

This point of view has now veered completely round. The amateur, the dilettante, has no chance beside the professional. To win respect a woman must be thoroughly in earnest about her work; it must be her chief thought, the object of her life, and the more pecuniarily profitable she can make it the more consideration she will receive.

Now that the gentlewoman has gone into trade, there is no avenue which can be said to be closed to her. The last stronghold of social prejudice has been stormed and taken. What the new development will be is difficult to forecast. The tendency to the sub-division of labour, to the creation of fresh departments of activity, is favourable to women, who can more easily take up new enterprises than win their way in occupations already practised by men. The merit of women as workers is their adaptability to new conditions. They are more receptive than men, more plastic, and their instinct often guides them aright in undertakings for which there is no precedent. Their best chances lie in the ever-multiplying openings for energy which the complexity of modern life is constantly creating. New paths, even if rather tangled, afford better opportunities than the beaten tracks.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MODERN WOMAN OF BUSINESS.

Changes in the occupations of women—The number of women employed in industries—Working wives—Trades recently opened to women—Women as compositors and type-writers—The modern shop-assistant—Trades now followed by women—The change of opinion as to women's occupations.

In the present century the development of trade and manufactures has made a great change in the lives of women of the lower middle class. Families from which the ranks of domestic servants were recruited are now entirely absorbed in the industrial population. The girls, instead of being sent out to service, are apprenticed to some trade. They are filled with visions of independence, to be realized only after long hours of confinement in a crowded workroom, or standing from early morning to late evening behind a counter.

It is curious to note how the idea of what is fitting and desirable has changed. Fifty years ago the artisan, the farmer, and small tradesman desired

nothing better for their daughters than to procure a "good place in a gentleman's family." The girls themselves were generally willing to adopt this method of filling up the time as a prelude to marriage. But different views prevail now. It is not that domestic service has become harder; on the contrary, it is easier, for household improvements and appliances have lessened what is known as "menial work," and there is a tendency to subdivide labour and multiply service, so that two are now frequently employed to do what used to be the work of one. But, apart from the question of wages, there is a feeling that by working at some industry, or in a shop, the girls put themselves on to a higher plane than by going into service.

Among the women of the working classes the sense of the value of independence is of quicker growth than among the women of the middle classes, who are apt to be troubled by notions concerning woman's proper "sphere." The fresh opportunities offered to working women have been embraced by them, for they have not had to run counter to class prejudices. The general feeling was that they were taking a step forward by entering trade. Among the middle classes the women who struck out into new paths for the sake of gaining economic independence were thought to

be making a very doubtful experiment, but among the working classes, who have less to risk, the fresh openings were eagerly embraced. It is not women's fitness or unfitness for business that has determined their career so much as the accident of their position in society. Even as far back as 1851, when the census was taken, there were three millions of women in Great Britain, exclusive of Ireland, who were engaged in industrial occupations, and more than one-third of this number were returned as independent and self-supporting.* About half a million were wives engaged in helping their husbands, either behind the counter, at the desk, or in the process of manufacture.

Changes that have wrested from women some of their old employments have opened up to them others formerly out of their reach. The number and variety of patents taken out by women in London every month show how various are the ways in which women are now putting forth their skill and energy. During April, May, and June of the year 1895 there were seventy-three patents taken out by sixty-nine women, and these patents included a diversity of articles—from a hat and veil pin to self-registering calipers.

Trades that used to be exclusively in the hands

* *Edinburgh Review*, April, 1859.

of men are now open to women. Printing, for instance, has in recent times absorbed numbers of girls, in spite of the hostility of the trade-unions. Women make excellent compositors, and are able to "lock up" their formes, even if they cannot compete with men in the machine-room.

The modern invention of type-writing has also been taken advantage of by women, and though it is rather an adjunct to the business of life than a necessity like printing, it is daily coming more and more into use.

Besides numerous small industries which have only arisen in recent times, there are now open to women what may be called the inferior branches of the fine arts, such as photography, pattern-designing for carpets and wall-papers, carving, modelling, and painting on various substances. For these things not only is an apprenticeship needed, but in some cases a regular art-education, which precludes the generality of women from engaging in these occupations.

The development of retail trade, and the attention given to shop decoration and display, have created quite a new type of shopwoman, and also a much larger demand for her services. In 1851, while the female shopkeepers numbered 29,000, the shopwomen were only 1742 for the whole kingdom.

Of course, among the 29,000 shopkeepers there were a great many who did not keep any assistants, but managed their little businesses entirely themselves.

The shopwoman, as has been said, is now of a different order. The elegantly-attired damsel, with her elaborately dressed hair, who serves the public with drapery, bonbons, flowers, and ornaments, and makes the homely buyer, in unpretentious array, feel at a complete disadvantage, came in with the plate-glass fronts, the electric lamps, the gorgeous show-rooms, in which the modern shopocracy delight, and for which the public pays dearly. In the quiet, dimly-lighted London shops of the early part of the century the modern shopwoman would have looked strangely out of place.

In former times men and women were comrades in trade on equal terms, but as industry developed, and was carried on under different conditions, women were shunted off the main lines into the less lucrative side-paths and their places taken by men. Finally, when the industrial revolution, of which the chief motor was machinery, set in, women were forced back to fill up the lowest ranks, to perform all the initial processes, to become "slaves of an iron slave." Now, by a turn of Fortune's wheel, they are gaining ground in their turn and

pressing in among the male workers. Whereas men had in times past seized upon all sorts of employments which naturally seemed to belong to women, such as the making of articles of female attire, women are now turning to some of the occupations which might appear more properly to belong to men. They are employed in tailoring, in metal working, in nail and chain making. They are even horse-breakers, grooms, boatmen, and blacksmiths. For the most part they are still among the inferior workers. As Miss Simcox wrote in 1879, "Very many of the worst paid trades are followed principally by women, very few exclusively by men." *

In other countries it is the same. The modern manufacturing system requires a large amount of mechanical labour. "Skilled artisanship is swept away as a survival of a past which is condemned to disappear." † Women are forced, by their numerical disproportion and the exigencies of their condition, into all sorts of employments where they crowd the ranks of the unskilled. They have no other resource, and so they compete for work which keeps them from starvation and the streets. Foreigners and women are both looked

* *Fraser's Magazine.*

† Prince Krapotkin in *Nineteenth Century Magazine*, April, 1888.

at askance by the male worker, for both can live on less than he can, and are willing to work for lower wages.

In other classes as well as the industrial men are reluctantly learning the lesson that matters have changed, and that the old theories about the relative duties and occupations of the sexes will no longer avail in practice. The mistake has been in putting women on to a separate plane, in assuming that they had some specially created sphere. The evolution of social life in England and elsewhere has rudely exposed the fallacy of this notion. Women have found themselves neither protected nor provided for, but thrown on their own resources. In default of the old household occupations and domestic industries, they have turned to the factory, the workshop, the counter, the desk. Every day it becomes plainer that they must stand alone.

There are some women who are born to independence—the opulent minority with titles and estates, and those for whom others have worked; there are the women who achieve independence by their own energy and endurance; and there are the women who have independence thrust upon them—the great mass who must make their own way or perish. It is better for the community to

have women self-reliant and able to support themselves, whether single or married. The number of women who prefer being dependent on the exertions of male relatives to working themselves is happily diminishing, even among those who are not goaded by the actual pinch of poverty. It is being recognized that woman's vocation, like man's, is work, and wherever the work leads, thither the woman must follow.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FACTORY HAND.

Importance of the industrial as compared with the agricultural class — Women's position in the industrial market — Effects of machinery and the factory system on women's work—Break-up of family life — The factory question a women's question — Women's preference for outside work — Industrial legislation —Attitude of women workers.

THE industrial question has, as far as women are concerned, absorbed the agricultural question. The growth of trade and commerce, and the conversion of England into a manufacturing country, have resulted in a complete change of position for the working classes. Their relations to their employers are on a different footing. The connection is of a less permanent nature. A man or a woman working on the land and living on the land is obviously more closely bound to the owner than a factory or mill hand. Women labourers have been more affected by this change in the national life than men, in proportion to their numbers;

the larger part of out-door work falling to men in all periods. Whereas formerly it was the usual custom for women in rural districts to find their occupation in the fields, they now seek it elsewhere. They go into service when they are not wanted for butter and cheese making, get employment in country inns, or in the shops at the nearest market town. It is only here and there that they are seen working with the men on the land, except for short periods at special seasons, such as during hay-making. The hop-pickers, and the women employed in weeding and fruit-gathering in the market-gardens near London, who belong for the most part to the very poor, are not numerically important.

Some idea of the magnitude of the female industrial class, as opposed to the agricultural, may be gathered from the fact that the women who are members of trade unions number over 100,000,* and there remains the much vaster host of workers who have not sought combination, and whose number can only be approximately ascertained. While there are 21,000 women farmers and graziers, there are 52,000 shirt-makers and seamstresses, and upwards of 400,000 dressmakers and milliners.

In former times women did the reaping, the

* Speech by Sir Charles Dilke in *The Times*, April 23, 1895.

hoeing, the sheep-washing, the shearing, and even the thatching.* (In 1891 only two thatchers were returned in the census for England and Wales.) Their wages appear to have been much the same as those of the men, just a trifle less. All unskilled work was on a par. The rate of wages was fixed for each county by the magistrates, and after the middle of the sixteenth century there is more disparity between the remuneration of the sexes. As the price of labour rose, women did not benefit; on the contrary, they received less in proportion to the men. In 1661, when the male reapers in Essex were getting 1*s.* 10*d.* a-day, the women were paid 1*s.* 2*d.* In the fourteenth century there was more equality.

The work of women in agriculture has diminished relatively as well as absolutely. Men have absorbed most of the out-door labour and several indoor occupations as well. The "bakeresses," "regrateresses" (retailers of bread), "breweresses," or "brewsters," have disappeared, and their places are filled by men. The women have been driven into other employments, and forced into the ranks of the unskilled labourers. The lowest places in factories and workshops, and formerly the most repulsive work in mines, fell to women. When the

* Thorold Rogers, "Work and Wages."

growth of manufactures focussed industries into great centres, and when invention became busy with the creation of machinery, the women fell back, and they have been in the rear ever since, although spasmodic efforts have been made to rescue them, and they have been freed from some of the most debasing conditions of manual labour. They are no longer chained like brute-beasts to trucks, and made to drag enormous burdens in the heat and foulness of a coal mine. But as machinery has more and more been substituted for handwork, and as a greater subdivision of labour has taken place owing to improvements in method, women have not attained a higher position in the industrial market. They have still been jostling each other in the lower ranks. The manufacturing system has spread like a network over England, and has drawn in the working energy from the rural districts. Under the modern system there is a smaller quantity of skilled labour required in proportion to the unskilled, and women's work being rated, whether justly or unjustly, as inferior, there is less chance of their coming to the front.

Between the break-up of the gilds and the establishment of the regular factories, manufactures were carried on under what is known as the domestic system. It was the spread of industries

beyond the towns that brought about this change. People in country districts worked in their own homes. All the members of a family were employed in carding, spinning, and weaving. The farmer's wife and daughters, in the intervals of dairy work, were busily employed at the loom. There would sometimes be three or four looms in one house. But when, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the "mule" and the "spinning jenny" were invented, conditions began to alter. Industries grew too large to be carried on by private persons in dwelling-houses; and with the coming of the steam-engine hand labour was gradually superseded by machinery.

While the work was carried on in the home the women's part was as important as the men's—perhaps more so in agricultural districts, where the members of the family were much occupied with farming—but when, with the establishment of manufactures on a large scale, the work was taken out of the home and carried on in big factories, the labour of men was at once brought into greater requisition. The revolution in the means of production caused by machinery changed the whole aspect of life for the labouring classes. It was no longer the housewives who were the chief spinners and weavers. They were merged

in the great mass of male workers who thronged the factory.

Every one is familiar with the dismal history of the factory system and the horrors of its early stages, with the stories of child-torture and the brutalising effects of the life on both men and women.

"In the male," said Lord Shaftesbury, "the moral effects of the system are very bad ; but in the female they are infinitely worse, not alone upon themselves, but upon their families, upon society, and, I may add, upon the country itself. It is bad enough if you corrupt the man, but if you corrupt the woman, you poison the waters of life at the very fountain." *

The factory question has always been very largely a woman's question. The abolition of home industries and the domestic system affected the position of women even more than that of men, just as any change in the conditions of family life is more important to the female than the male members. When women, instead of sitting at their cottage doors with their children round them, or weaving near the hearth with an eye on the cradle, betook themselves to work in some great factory where they were immured all day long, they occupied a very different relation to the community

* Mary Merryweather, "Factory Life."

generally. They were then like the men, wage-earners, and came gradually to be regarded as competitors. "La mère, en vérité, n'est plus qu'un ouvrier comme son mari." In the first half of this century the actual number of women employed in factories seems to have been larger than the number of men. Taking the year 1861, in the 6378 factories then in existence, more than half the hands were women; and of the children employed, who numbered upwards of 50,000, more than half were girls. Monsieur Jules Simon says of the three kinds of work—"le travail isolé, le travail de fabrique, et le travail des manufactures"—that only the first is fitting for women. Under the factory system there can be no home life. "La famille disparâit nécessairement sous l'action du travail ainsi réglé." *

It is this absence of family life among a large section of the working classes which is the most striking result of the modern system, and the women are at a disadvantage in consequence. As workers they do not rank equally with men, though the demands on their time and strength are as great; they have no spare energy, and none of the compensations of home life. The home, indeed, is only an extra burden. While women in the middle

* "L'Ouvrière."

ranks have, in spite of drawbacks, advanced greatly under the altered conditions of society, which have opened up to them commercial and other pursuits, the women in the lower ranks have not received a corresponding benefit from a system which has drawn them into the great army of unskilled labourers. The women in factories and workshops are only "hands," and "hands" appraised at less value than men. As a modern German author has observed:—

"Darin unterscheidet sich unsere Zeit von jeder ihr vorangegangenen dass sie für den verschiedenen Gesellschaftsclassen so grundverschiedene Lebensformen geschaffen hat. Die nivellirende Kraft der Zeit zeigt sich nur darin, dass sie alles Individuelle, alles Originelle aus dem Leben der Völker weg hobelt, in dass sie innerhalbe jeder Gesellschaftsklasse alles auf's gleiche Mass zu bringen sucht." *

This levelling tendency, which it seems the aim of the modern Socialists to foster, is not confined to one section of the population, but it is more evident among the industrial classes, whose lives are necessarily circumscribed by material conditions. Under the present system work is harder, more monotonous, less responsible. Bit by bit all variety is squeezed out of it, so that the worker may become proficient in some one part, and perform

* Arnold von der Passer, "Eva aus dem Mittelstands."

that part in a manner as nearly as may be like a machine. However advantageous in an economic sense this may be to the community, it is hurtful to the individual, and more hurtful to women than to men, women having at all times to contend with physical and social disabilities which limit them at all points in their career. Town life in England for the working classes is the problem of philanthropists and legislators. The conditions which go to make a home worth working for are generally absent. And this being so it is but natural that the women's lives should approximate more and more closely to the men's, that they should prefer even the long hours of the factory, with the excitement of numbers, and the feeling that they are earning money, however hardly, to the dreary drudgery of life in a fourth-floor tenement, and the loneliness of labour which brings them no pecuniary reward. Roughly speaking, there are between fourteen and fifteen thousand women working in factories in England and Wales.

From the evidence of the recent Labour Commission, it appears that it is not at all uncommon for married women to pay almost as much as they earn, and in some cases actually more than their wages, to a caretaker to look after the house and children while they go to the factory. No doubt the large

majority of factory hands work for actual subsistence, and not for an exchange, but that there should be numbers who choose the outside work shows that the domestic hearth has not the same attractions for women as formerly. This is not, however, the view taken by the German writer of to-day already quoted. He draws a marked contrast between the aspirations of the woman of the burgher, or middle class, and those of the woman of the proletariat, and contends that while the former is striving for economic independence, *coûte qui coûte,* the latter, who is already shoulder to shoulder with men in the industrial struggle, yearns intently for the quietude of family life. Herr Arnold von der Passer says, referring to the middle-class woman:—

"Sie begehrt nicht bloss in beschränkter Häuslichkeit die Genossin des Mannes zu sein; sie will an seiner Seite, oder, wenn's nicht anders ist, auch gegen ihn, selbsthätig auftreten im wirthschaftlichen Kampfe der Zeit; die Frau des Arbeiters, des Proletariers, dagegen, steht bereits, dem harten zwange der Noth gehorchend, ihrer überwiegender Zahl nach, mitten drein in diesem Kampfe, und sie sehnt sich zurück aus dem Maschinengelose der Fabrikräume in die stille Häuslichkeit, an den Herd, an das Lager ihrer Kinder. Die Frau aus dem Bürgerstande möchte als Student, Gelehrter, Arzt, Beamter, Lehrer, oder Kaufmann, auf dem Plan treten; die Frau des Arbeiters hat vor Allem nur den Wunsch wieder Weib und Mutter sein zu dürfen. Für die Arbeiterklasse ist also bis zu einem gewissen

Punkte die Frauenfrage gerade das Gegentheil derjenigen welche die Bürgerklasse jetzt beschäftigt."

The effect of legislation on the industrial position of women must not be left out of account. There are those who assert that the exceptional legislation applied to the work of adult women in the present century is a distinct gain, a sign of progress, and marks a step forward in social evolution. And there are those who assert the contrary, who say women lose immeasurably more than they gain by a species of protection which only imposes another disability. In the early part of this century public sentiment was shocked by the revelations as to the mining system, by the degradation and cruelty to which women and children were subjected. Through the efforts of Lord Shaftesbury, in the first instance, an end was put to the worst evils, and the Factory Acts were subsequently extended to women. All this took place between 1830 and 1850. Since then the course of legislation has not, on the whole, been favourable to women. It has placed obstacles in their way by restricting their hours of labour. This interference on the part of the State with the work of adults has been much resented. Only this year there have been several deputations of working women to Cabinet Ministers, protesting against the provisions of the

Government Factory Bill to exclude women from certain trades described as dangerous, and to prohibit overtime in others.

Sex-legislation is the most liable of all to misuse, and to cause injury to those whom it seeks to benefit. At the present day women of the industrial classes are forced by a combination of circumstances to earn their livelihood, or what passes as such, in factories and workshops like men. They must either do that or starve, unless they go on to the streets. Owing to the enormous pressure of population, and the over-supply of unskilled labour, the competition is severe enough among the women themselves, but legislation is seeking to add to the inherent difficulties of the case by ranking adults with juveniles (who may be supposed to require protection), and so making their labour less marketable.

Much of the legislation of the present day is not intended, like the first factory legislation, to remove offences against decency and humanity, and does nothing to render the lives of working women easier. But it helps to make their means of livelihood more precarious. During the debate on the Factories and Workshops Bill, which was introduced into Parliament in April, 1895,* it was

* *The Times*, April 23, 1895. There are upwards of 880,000 women, employed in thirty-one different trades, who are affected by the factory legislation of 1895.

justly pointed out that adult women were competent judges of their own requirements, and should not be forced to work under restrictions against their will. To prohibit women from working overtime in certain industries, such as laundries, where the hours are necessarily fluctuating, or in "season" trades, is obviously against their best interests. What trade legislation is doing for women is to create inequalities which need not have been called into being, and which intensify all the evils that women now endure. In a state of society which compels women to throng the industrial market, one-sided enactments, which at once give men an additional advantage, increase starvation and prostitution. Women want more liberty, not less, and they can decide better as to their own needs than their self-constituted judges, to whom the technicalities of the various trades are complete mysteries. It happened once that a deputation of working women was waiting on one of the Ministers, who put a number of questions to the women concerning their work, with the details of which he was totally unacquainted. As the deputation retired, one of the number remarked compassionately, "Poor gentleman! it's hard on him to have to make the laws when he don't know nothing about them."

CHAPTER X.

THE DOMESTIC SERVANT.

Position of the domestic servant—More men formerly employed in domestic service—The *demoiselles* and *chambrières* of former days—Servants in Elizabethan days—Interior of Hengrave Hall in the seventeenth century—Duties of maidservants in 1677—Servants' dress regulated—Want of good servants in the last century—Defoe's observations on servants—A foreigner's opinion of English servants—Complaints of servants' costume—Registry-offices of the last century—Servants' wages—Where our servants come from—Domestic service at the present day.

THE female domestic servant holds a curious position in the industrial class. She is at once the scorned and the scorner. The factory girl despises her for want of spirit in submitting to be at the beck and call of a mistress all day, and wearing badges of servitude; while the trim maid regards the slatternly factory-girl, who is only a "hand," with unutterable contempt. The shop-assistant, who always hears herself spoken of as a "young lady," would indignantly resent any implied equality with a mere servant, who in her turn looks upon

the long hours and rigid rules of a house of business as white slavery.

The type of servant usually found in those middle-class households termed "gentlemen's families" extends her aversion for "the shop" to the proprietors, and feels that she has let herself down when she condescends to serve people who are earning their living in such a disgustingly obvious manner. As for the servants who live, as they express it, in "high families," they are both the best and the worst specimens of their kind. The advantages and disadvantages of their position are much more strongly marked than in the case of the servants of the middle classes, and make both virtues and vices more prominent. The most striking examples of fidelity, trustworthiness, and efficiency are to be found among the servants of the nobility, just as there are among them also the most practised liars, thieves, and mischief-makers.

In past times domestic work was more largely shared by men. Boys and youths were employed in kitchen work which is now performed by scullery-maids, and male servants called chamberlains did much of the work for which housemaids are now employed. In ecclesiastical households there were sometimes no female servants at all, except perhaps the brewsters. In modern times the proportion of

women to men servants has become much greater. In 1838 the number of women servants to every thousand of the population was 102, while the number of men was only sixteen.*

The whole system of domestic service has changed its footing, and the anomalies which exist create a good deal of friction. There are no more ties between servants and their masters than between other working people and their employers in shops and factories. It is all a question of wages. But the servants are admitted to a closeness of association, in many instances to a degree of intimacy, which ought not to be accorded to mere strangers residing temporarily in the household. Then the restraints of service and the absence of personal freedom are galling when there is no tie but the money bond. A kind of feudal authority is exercised over the servant, who is supposed to be always at the disposal of the mistress, to whom she is answerable for her comings and goings. She must wear a uniform—of her own providing—and a mask of propriety which she throws off as soon as she is among her fellows. The discipline of a private household, with its petty rules, may be made harder to bear than that of a workshop or public

* *London and Westminster Review*, 1838.

institution, for where authority is exercised over a few persons the restraint is felt more than where shared with numbers.

In olden times it was not considered fitting that ladies should be attended and served except by those who were also of gentle blood. All the little personal services were performed by *demoiselles*, the daughters of gentlemen, sent to learn the domestic arts and housewifely accomplishments necessary for a gentlewoman to acquire. These *chambrières* did a great deal of work that young ladies of the present day would think hard and tiresome. The real "servants" were of a very different order—sturdy wenches, accustomed to coarse fare, rough clothes, and not particular as to their sleeping quarters. They may have been treated somewhat better than boys and men; but, even after the mediæval period, in Elizabethan times, when domestic arrangements had somewhat improved, it was not thought necessary in general to provide regular beds and bedding for "menials" in good houses—

"As for servants if they had any shete above them it was well, for seldom had they any under their bodies to keep them from the pricking strawes that ranne off thorow the canvas and razed their hardened hides." *

* A Jessop, "One Generation of a Norfolk House."

In Saxon times servants were frequently treated with great cruelty, and were in a condition of absolute servitude. The Saxon ladies do not bear a good reputation for their conduct towards their inferiors.

Passing on to the seventeenth century, it only needs a glance at the interior of a gentleman's house to see how utterly different were the conditions of domestic service from those of the present day. Although the general housekeeping was a much weightier affair, owing to the fact that all sorts of processes now performed outside were then carried on inside the home, the furniture and accessories were of the simplest character. There were no ornaments or fragile *bric-à-brac*, nothing that required careful moving and dusting. The rawest of country wenches could have been trusted, for instance, in the summer parlour of Hengrave Hall, Suffolk, the residence of the Kytson family. When an inventory was taken of the contents of the house in 1603, the aforesaid parlour was found to contain the following items of furniture—

"One long Turkeye carpett, one square bord carpett of Turkeye worke and one coobard carpet of Turké work; three long cushions of needle work in crewell, two chayers covered with like work and fringed with crewell; twelve hye joined stooles, covered with like worke, six hye joined

stooles covered with carpet worke and fringed with crewell, two curtyns for the windowe of greene and white striped moccadoe; one greene carpett cloth for the folding side bord; one long table with a frame, and one longe foot stole; one square borde with a frame; one side borde with a faste frame to it with foulden leaves and one joyned coobard; three joyned stooles and three little foot stooles; one payer of andyrons."

While dealing with this period it may be opportune to note some directions for maidservants in a large household in 1677. The directions are in tabular form for every day in the week, showing that there was systematic supervision :—

"*Mondays.*—Looke out the foule cloths and cale the maids and sit and stay by them tell they be all mended.

"*Tuesdays.*—Clene the Romes and Chers from ye great Rome to the norsery and ye beads on ye Tope and botum, and dust ye feathers.

"*Wednesdays.*—Clene all the Romes, Chers and beads onder and Tope with ye feathers from the norsery to ye Egll Chamber.

"*Thorsdays.*—Clene ye Hall and Parlors windows, tables, chears, and Pictors below stairs.

"*Fridays.*—Scoure all the grats, tongs and Hand-Irons.

"*Saturdays.*—Clene the Store House shelf and Dressers.

"*Every-day.*—Once for one houre in ye fore noune goe through all ye Romes and see it doith not Raine into them and dust them all doune and swipe them."

There are also special directions for the dairy-maid and cook :—

"*Dery-maid.*—Wash yo^{r} dery every day; and for yo^{r} milke and butter doe as you will be dericted. Churne Tuisdays and Fridays. Sarve ye swine and Poultrey night and morning. And for the Hoges-meat any of the servent mens should cary that out for you. Observe well the time for seting all sorts of yo^{r} Poultrey; once every weeke make ye hoose bred; and same shall Helpe you to kneed.

"To Helpe them wash w^{n} washing days comes. Milk yo^{r} cows in good time."

The grammar is rather lame, but the meaning is tolerably clear.

The cook's duties were as follows—

"*Cooke-maid.*—Washe yo^{r} chitchen every night, and the Larders every other day, Shelfes and dressers, and scour the puter we use every Friday night, and all the Rest of ye puter once every month. Kepe yo^{r} kitchen exthrodinary clene.

"To helpe upon washing days the Rest of ye maids to wash. And make all ye maids bring doune there candellstickes yé first thinge in a morning to be maid clene." *

The costume of servants was under regulation though the days of sumptuary laws were numbered. In 1611 a precept was issued by the Lord Mayor of London to the Grocers' Company, complaining among other things of—

"the inordynate pryde of mayde servaunts and women

* "Historical MSS. Commission."

servauntes in their excesse of apparell and follye in varietie of newe fashions, and to admonish them to have a due and speciall care to see a spedye reformacion had in everye one of their servants."

It was ordained with regard to maidservants that they should not wear on their heads lawn, cambric, or tiffany, or linen costing more than five shillings an ell, and that their head-gear should not be trimmed with lace. Their kerchiefs were to be quite plain, but they were not prohibited wearing ruffs which did not exceed four yards in length "before the gathering or setting in thereof nor three inches in depth within the setting in thereof." Gowns and kirtles were not to be made of any kind of silk or of kersey which cost above three shillings a yard. There was to be no silk or lace trimming on any part of the costume, and farthingales were strictly forbidden "either little or great."

In former times domestic servants, in common with what are called the lower orders, were separated from the gentlefolks by impassable barriers of tradition and training. They were accustomed to be patronized, tyrannized over, and treated generally like inferior beings. And though they might envy the lot of those above them, no notion of equality entered their minds, and they would have secretly despised a master or mistress who entertained any

such idea. A juster relationship now exists between servants and their employers, but the former, while their position has improved, are less content with their calling. They do not wish to be recognized for what they are, and endeavour to appear to the outside world under another aspect. They dislike the emblems of work, and are ashamed of the name of servant.

In the eighteenth century people grumbled as they do now at good servants being so scarce. "Les bons domestiques, en hommes et en femmes, sont très difficiles à trouver." It would seem as if the fault lay a good deal with the masters and mistresses, for the writer continues: "Les Anglais traitent durement leurs domestiques par principes." But for the employer to insist on some sort of character or reference with a servant is not thought an oppressive measure in England, though it appeared exacting to the Frenchman, who remarks of the servants—

"Ils ne peuvent trouver une nouvelle condition que sur un certificat en bonnes règles de vie et de mœurs. Cette clause les tient dans le devoir; mais les servantes, si elles sont jeunes ou jolies, à la première faute grave qu'elles commettent, elles sont congediées et vont se prostituer au premier venu. Aussi Londres est elle inondée de coureuses qui volent les passans au coin des rues. Elles marchent,

par troupeaux, elles vous escamottent mouchoir et montre avec une adresse inimitable."

The condition of domestic servants in the last quarter of the century showed considerable improvement.

"Servants are much more enlightened than they were, even thirty years ago. Most of them are not only able to read, but to understand what they read, and as willing to be instructed and improved in the duties required of them as their employers are desirous they should be." *

Of all the writers on servants in the last century the most censorious and emphatic was Defoe.

"The insufferable behaviour of servants in this nation is now (it may be hop'd) come to its height; their measure of insolence I think may be said to be quite full."

How different is Defoe's judgment of the masters from that of the Frenchman just quoted. Defoe blames them for their laxity. He is not satisfied with the old proverb, that the English are the best masters and the worst servants in the world, but would change it to—

"The English have the uneasiest servants because they are the easiest masters in the world. . . . In England the rich know not how to be masters, and therefore the poor know not how to be servants."

Those who are wont to lament the dressiness

* Dr. Trusler, "Domestic Management," 1791.

of the modern maid as something peculiar to the degeneracy of the present day will perhaps experience a kind of dreary comfort from the knowledge that precisely the same complaint went up even in the seventeenth century.

"The women are much affected with gaudry," writes Evelyn, in the character of a French nobleman, "there being nothing more frequent than to see an antient ladie wear colours; a thing which neither young nor old of either sex do with us save in the country and the camp, but widows at no time. . . . The truth is they have no moderation, and are neither lucky nor frugal as our ladies are in these sumptuary expenses; and whereof the magistrate takes so little cognisance that it is not an easy matter to distinguish the ladie from the chambermaid; servants being suffered in this brave country to go clad like their mistrisses, a thing neither decent nor permitted in France, where they may wear neither lace nor silke." *

When fashionable dress was so elaborate, the incongruity of domestic servants being arrayed in all the bravery of fine ladies was particularly striking:—

"La manière d'être des servantes angloises est peut-être ce qui étonne le plus un étranger à Londres. Elles sont assez généralement bien faites, bien mises; leur costume même est parfaitement celui des personnes les plus comme il faut, leur ton celui de la meilleure société: il est donc assez simple qu'un étranger soit dans les premiers temps assez embarrassé avec elles, et qu'il ait de la peine à les prendre pour de simples servantes. Leur

* John Evelyn, "Character of England."

vêtement de tous les jours est une longue robe juste à la taille et un chapeau de soie garni de ruban. Il en est même beaucoup qui ne portent que des habits de soie et des mantelets de taffetas lors qu'elles sont parées. . . . L'œil le plus connoisseur a peine à les distinguer de leurs maîtresses. Tout leur extérieur annonce une personne opulente et comme il faut. Elles ont droit aux égards les plus marqués, elles accompagnent ordinairement leurs maîtresses dans les promenades."

One wonders how the maids found time to patch and paint and trick themselves out in hooped petticoats, sacques, and French hoods. The modern servant, who has to make a hurried toilette for her weekly "evening out," has reason to be thankful for the celerity with which she can effect a transformation in her appearance. With all its defects, the costume of the present day has the recommendation of being easy to don and doff. Simple or elaborate, however, whatever is worn by the mistress will be adopted by the maid. So it was in the past.

"It would be a satyr upon the ladies," wrote Defoe, in 1724, "such as perhaps they would not bear the reading of, should we go about to tell, how hard it is sometimes to know the chamber maid from her mistress; or my lady's chief woman from one of my lady's daughters."

And Defoe, who was troubled much at the increased rate of wages, which he declared were

doubled and trebled, attributes the rise to the wearing of finery.

"From this gaiety of dress must necessarily follow encrease of wages, for where there is such an expence in habit there must be a proportion'd supply of money or it will not do."

Other people besides Defoe noticed and lamented the smart appearance, coupled with the higher wages, of the domestic servant as the century advanced. A correspondent to *The Times* wrote, in 1794:—

"I think it is the duty of every good master and mistress to stop as much as possible the present ridiculous and extravagant mode of dress in their domestics. . . . Formerly a plaited cap and a white handkerchief served a young woman three or four Sundays. Now a mistress is required to give up, by agreement, the latter end of the week for her maids to prepare their caps, tuckers, gowns, etc., for Sunday, and I am told there are houses open on purpose, where those servants who do not choose their mistresses shall see them, carry their dresses in a bundle and put them on, meet again in the evening for the purpose of disrobing, and where I doubt many a poor deluded creature has been disrobed of her virtue. They certainly call aloud for some restraint both as to their dress as well as insolent manner."

And in the same year it was said that wages had gone up in the last decade more than for thirty or forty years before, with a correspondingly ill result as to manners and morals.

Servants' wages were formerly limited by statute, and among the Elizabethan enactments is one giving power to the Justices of the Peace and the Mayors to send out to service, at fixed rates of remuneration, any unmarried woman between the ages of twelve and forty whom they shall think fit.

"If any woman shall refuse to serve it shall be lawful for the Justices to commit such woman to ward until she shall be bounden to serve."

These and other laws, if not repealed, fell into disuse, and Defoe complains that enactments relating to servants were—

"brought into contempt, not so much that the reason and necessity of such laws are not the same as ever, or if alter'd are only greater and more pungent than ever; but because masters and mistresses have slackened the reins of family government."

The present mode of procuring servants through registry-offices is not new. Something of the kind existed in the last century. There were places called accommodation-offices, which were said to have the worst possible influence on the servants, who, fancying they were always sure to obtain situations, grew reckless, and were often deceived and brought into difficulties.

It was formerly the custom, as old-fashioned housekeepers know, to pay wages quarterly. In the seventeenth century wages were paid at the quarter, half-quarter, and sometimes at the twelvemonth. In the Howard "Household Book" there is an entry, "To James the Butler for one year due about Whitsunday 40/-." In the household of Princess Cecil, mother of Edward IV., wages were paid half-yearly. As to the rates, a cook in a large house like Melbourne Hall, Derbyshire, received £4 a-year in 1630 (an amount which Pepys, a little later, grumbles at having to pay), a housemaid £3, and a dairymaid £3. But at that period chickens and ducks could be bought for sixpence each, a turkey for eighteenpence, and mutton was twopence-halfpenny a pound. Coffee, a lately imported luxury, was seven shillings a pound.

In 1756 the wages of a cook in a baronial house were only £1 1*s.*, and those of a housekeeper £2. There must have been some "extras" in this household which do not appear, one would think. An enactment had been made in 1725 by the Justices of the Peace that a "best woman servant being a cook or able to take charge of a household," should not receive more than £2 10*s.*, with food, while a chambermaid, dairymaid, or

washmaid was paid £2, or, if under sixteen years of age, £1 10*s.*

The purchasing power of money was greater then, so that these sums represent much more than the same amounts would at the present day. The economic changes that have taken place since have all been favourable to domestic servants, who are free from the one item of expense—house rent—which has so greatly increased during the present century, while clothing materials have all cheapened. The standard of living, too, has risen, and servants now enjoy many luxuries which formerly were only seen on the tables of their employers.

In 1859 two-thirds of our domestic servants, or about half a million, came from the rural districts,* which shows how female agriculturists have diminished in numbers. There are now some twenty thousand women farmers, but field and farm workers are much fewer than formerly. At the period referred to, about one-third of the women belonging to town families engaged in independent industries, and six-sevenths belonging to similar families in the country became domestic servants. In towns the counter attractions of shops, and in manufacturing centres of factories, draw off large numbers who would otherwise fill up the ranks of servants. And

* *Edinburgh Review*, April, 1859.

in recent times the development of various industrial employments has further contributed to reduce the numbers who seek domestic service.

There are probably now fewer general servants in proportion than there were thirty or forty years ago, when they formed one-half of the entire number. Next came the charwomen, who constituted one-eighth, and after these, housekeepers, there being about three thousand more housekeepers than cooks, and about five thousand more cooks than housemaids.* Although modern styles of building and modern conveniences have greatly lightened domestic work, more service is required, owing to the change of habits and customs. In households where formerly the mistress would have been satisfied with a young girl to do the rough work a couple of regular servants are now kept. The actual number of women employed as domestic servants in England and Wales, according to the census of 1891, was 1,386,167. The men numbered only 58,527. Among hotel servants the sexes are far more evenly proportioned, the figures giving 46,364 males and 44,319 females.

The condition of the domestic servant has in many ways immensely improved. She has more luxuries, easier work, and higher wages. But she

* *Edinburgh Review*, April, 1859.

has drifted into a position full of contradictions. She does not seek either protection or friendship. The mistress and servant are practically strangers, meeting on the footing of employer and employed, with nothing between them but work and wages.

The short terms of service are largely responsible for this condition of things. A mistress feels no more than a temporary concern with the career of a maid who in a few months may have passed entirely out of her ken. And the maid does not regard a family whom she has only consented to serve as long as it suits her convenience with any feeling of attachment. It is her aim to acquire as nearly as possible the independence of the outside worker while retaining the privileges of a member of a household, an attitude which creates mistrust on the part of the mistress and leads to friction.

Domestic service is full of anomalies. The servant grows accustomed to a style of living which is beyond her means if she returns to dwell with her own class. The mistress pays extravagantly, not in wages merely, but in establishment expenses, for small returns. Eventually, perhaps, the English aristocracy will realize that they can live with less attendance, like their Continental neighbours, who marvel at British extravagance. If it were not

for an obstinate clinging to heavy entertainments, and a barbaric love of show, there would be no occasion for the present waste of servant power and of the energy spent by the mistress in perfecting the domestic machinery.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MODERN HUMANITARIAN MOVEMENT.

Capacity of women for organization—Character of modern philanthropy—Women the mainspring of the Humanitarian Movement—Baroness Burdett-Coutts—Miss Octavia Hill—Miss Emma Cons—The Moral Movement—Mrs. Butler and Miss Ellice Hopkins—Temperance work—Associations for the benefit of girls—Miss Frances Power Cobbe on women's work.

WHILE women have been pressing into trade and business occupations of all sorts, they have shown equal zeal in unpaid work.

The prominent part taken by women in the modern humanitarian movement is remarkable in two ways. The effect on the women themselves is hardly less striking than the effect on the work in which they are engaged. Women have developed an unexpected capacity for organization, an enterprise in arduous undertakings, and an enthusiasm for difficult, disagreeable, and unpromising work. Philanthropy in the present day makes great demands upon the worker. It is not enough to

be in earnest, to be self-sacrificing, to have money and be willing to spend it. All these things are desirable, but they are only a part of the qualification necessary. The philanthropist must also have business talents, enthusiasm tempered by a finely balanced judgment, and an omniscience which can avoid the mistake of giving in the wrong place, of committing the evil of "over-lapping."

It used to be a simple thing to be charitable as long as one had the means; there was the want and there was the money, and it was only a question of making the one fit the other. But it is a different matter now. Serious considerations have to be taken into account. First and foremost there is the fear of pauperizing, a fear which rarely troubled benefactors in the past; there is the fear of imposition—of giving to unworthy objects—which, again, is a comparatively modern terror, begotten of huge, overgrown cities, in which no one knows the antecedents and circumstances of his neighbours. There is the danger to be guarded against of interfering with some other donor, who may be an individual, but is more commonly a society; there is the necessity for making sure that a moral injury is not inflicted on the recipient by the manner of the gift, and that while the needs of the body are being supplied, a spirit of servility and dependence is not

being fostered. And, lastly, there is the enormous competition of claims for help, so that the bewildered philanthropist, comparing his own means and energy with the demands around him, is reduced at last to the conclusion that the only safe path is the path of inaction, and that after all it is futile to try to stem the tide of misery.

The refuge of the modern philanthropist is organization. It is not merely that the work is so large that it would be hopeless to attack it without, but that the philanthropist feels the need of the moral support which combination affords. The problems involved in rendering aid of any kind are so large that the responsibility is too much for one individual. If the philanthropist be rich, he pours his wealth into certain well-defined channels where its course will be directed by bands of workers from the first to the last drop. If he cannot give money, but only time, he makes one of a "movement."

Modern philanthropists are drawn, not only from the leisured class, but from the busy middle class which is earning its own living, not subsisting on inherited incomes. It is this new force, organization, that has made it possible for women of limited means to take such an active share in philanthropic work. In the past, philanthropy

meant simply parting with wealth, the superfluity of the rich supplying the necessities of the poor. In the present day it means a vast amount of intelligent and voluntary labour. Money is certainly spent very largely on philanthropic schemes, but the actual work of the philanthropist does not consist so much in the giving of money or of kind as in carrying out systems of benevolence, mutual aid, and reform.

It has been remarked that while men are free to engage or not, as they please, in works of charity, it is expected of women, in the leisured classes at least, that they should become to a certain extent philanthropists.* It has only in recent years been recognized, and even now very imperfectly, that philanthropy is not a thing which any one can take up in spare hours, for a certain part of the year, when other occupations fail. A tyro in philanthropy is a more dangerous and obnoxious person than a tyro in art or literature, for while no one is compelled to gaze at bad pictures and read silly books, the whole of society suffers from the effects of unwise charity. Women make the best and the worst philanthropists. All the noblest qualities of womanhood are called into play in the effort to relieve suffering. The personal

* *Cornhill Magazine*, 1874.

element, which is often a hindrance to women in other work, stands them in good stead in philanthropy, but they are apt to fritter away energies on trifling matters, and to lose sight of principles. A woman is always impressed by a detail, and will wear herself out in trying to remedy recurrent evils which are only manifestations of some greater ill which escapes her notice.

Women are the mainspring of the humanitarian movement of the nineteenth century. Whether the work is distinctly religious or distinctly secular makes no difference; it is at bottom women's work. There is an immense amount of work carried on in connection with the churches, Established and Dissenting, which would formerly have been considered quite outside the pale of ecclesiasticism, but of which the clergy and ministers now take cognizance. It is work mainly carried on by women, though they are not the recognized heads. The same holds good of the lay organizations. Women are the agents when they are not the actual initiators and leaders.

Some of the most useful schemes for improving the condition of the people have been originated by women. The benevolent labours of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts have made her the representative of modern English female philanthropy. Miss

Octavia Hill and Miss Emma Cons, in their own especial line—the housing of the poor—and also in their general work, have become not only great philanthropists, but public educators. They are doing on a large scale what hundreds of women are doing in smaller ways.

It is thirty years since Miss Octavia Hill began her plan of letting out weekly tenements to the poor under her personal superintendence. The plan was warmly commended by Mr. Ruskin, who furnished all the money necessary at the beginning, and made himself responsible for the expenses. But the plan succeeded so well that in a year and a half it was paying five per cent. on all capital. Some people may object that a business scheme is not philanthropy, but philanthropy carried out on business principles is usually the most helpful and lasting.

The Baroness Burdett-Coutts, like some great lady of olden time, has built churches and founded charities, and, by a generous and wise distribution of her immense wealth, has made for herself an enduring name. London has been the chief field of her philanthropy, and has received the largest share of her benevolence, though Ireland, her own county of Wiltshire, and more than one of the colonies will always hold her in grateful memory.

Religious work, technical education, and industries are all her debtors on a large scale. She has, as it were, formed an era in the history of philanthropy. The multiform nature of her sympathies, and the personal part which she takes in the movements of the day, have brought her into relations with workers of various grades. Nothing seems either too large or too small for her if there is an evil to be remedied. At one time it was the starving Irish peasantry, on whose behalf, during the potato famine of 1880, she offered the Government £250,000 for seed and for wiping out the debts of the destitute. On another occasion it was the beautiful humming-birds, which were being cruelly trapped to be used as adornments in bonnets.

It is one of the peculiar characteristics of women that they are able to attend to many things at one time. Their lives are so usually encumbered with detail that they have acquired the faculty of passing rapidly from one subject to another, added to which their sympathies and their perceptive powers are quicker than those of men, so that they are both stirred to action and able to grasp their object more readily.

"Women," says Buckle, "prefer the deductive method, and by encouraging men in deductive habits have rendered

service to the progress of knowledge. The inductive method is slower and more practical. Women are deductive because they think faster and possess more intuition."*

The varied nature of the work which must be included under the head of philanthropy has brought out the need for women's activities in a striking way. The strength of the moral movement, which comprehends several different phases of work, lies chiefly in the women engaged in its furtherance. Much of it can only be done by women, and it is certain that some of the worst evils could never be touched at all without the ministration of women. Among the best known living representatives of this work are Mrs. Josephine Butler and Miss Ellice Hopkins.

The Temperance movement, again, comes under the category of philanthropy, and there women are the most zealous and successful of workers. The existence of that large body, the National British Women's Temperance Association, with its numerous branches all over the country, and its brilliant president — Lady Henry Somerset — is a signal proof of the activity of women in this sphere of work; the more so because it is not an adjunct to a men's association, but an independent organization, managed entirely by women.

* Buckle, "Influence of Women on the Progress of Knowledge."

The work among young women of the servant class, such as the Girls' Friendly Society and the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, the constant efforts put forth to brighten life in poor districts, the numerous benevolent associations, the visiting of the sick in hospitals and infirmaries, the multiform societies for ameliorating the ills of poverty, raising the standard of health and enjoyment, and—that which ought also to be included as one of the truest forms of philanthropy—the various schemes for training girls so as to fit them for some occupation, either as domestic servants, or in more skilled employments, are proofs of the enormous part which women play in the humanitarian movement. To particularize the work of these associations, of which only some of the most important are mentioned, would fill a volume. Every society has its own record, and the facts are easily accessible to all who desire information. In 1862 Miss Frances Power Cobbe wrote:—

"It would be a vain task to attempt to give any definite account of the work which women have been doing in England since the date of the Crimean War,"

which she regards as the starting-point of modern English female philanthropy. The years which have elapsed since Miss Cobbe wrote these words

in *Fraser's Magazine* cover a period more than three times as long as that to which she alluded. It is a period, too, which is much longer relatively as well as absolutely in point of activity. The field has widened, and the workers have multiplied at a bewildering rate, for with the rapid growth of the population new problems have arisen. If philanthropic work in the decade following the Crimean War was a thing difficult to grasp in its entirety, it is now a complex machinery, which can only be viewed in sections, and whose involutions are too intricate to be described except in a work specially devoted to the subject.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SISTERHOOD SYSTEM.

Revival of religious orders—The Anglican sisterhoods—Clewer and Harriet Monsell—Bishop Wordsworth on sisterhoods—Growth of the sisterhood system—"Sisters" in the hospitals—Significance of the movement.

It was not until nearly the middle of the present century that the Church of England began to re-awake to what had been a leading principle in pre-Reformation times—the co-operation of women in its social work. After the break-up of the monastic houses, the influence of women in the religious life of the country practically ceased. But with the Oxford Movement and the general awakening of the High Church party a new era arose in the history of the Church. Protestantism had fostered a distrust of religious communities. Anything which savoured of a return to monasticism was shunned. The conventual life as a product of Rome was looked upon with disfavour. Whatever of religious zeal existed in the eighteenth

and the first portion of the nineteenth century was to be found in the Evangelical party in the Church, and among the Dissenters, who were gradually consolidating into more defined sects. Neither the Evangelicals nor the Dissenters tried to work in communities. Their work was more individual than co-operative. They did not work according to rule and pattern, but each after his or her own way. Their religious life was active not on account of any inspiration from attachment to a central authority, but because the workers were fervid in their beliefs. But as, from different causes, the Evangelical party in the Church declined, it became obvious that if the Church were to hold its own in face of the growing importance of the Dissenters a new force must be put in motion. It was the Dissenters who started Sunday-schools. It was the Dissenters who were the forerunners in philanthropic work. With regard to women, the Anglicans could show no such names as those of Elizabeth Fry and her co-workers.

It is scarcely necessary to go into the history of the Oxford Movement, the growth of the High Church party, or the causes which led to its formation. The point of interest here is one of the outcomes of that movement—the revival of the system of religious communities—and the way in

which it brought women into what may be called official connection with the Church.

Whether the sisterhood system is or is not a desirable one is a question which will be decided according to religious bias. It re-established the ascendency of the clergy over women's lives, and it was a fresh starting-point for the Church as organizer of works of social and moral reform. The most celebrated of Anglican sisterhoods, Clewer, arose through the need that was felt for reclaiming the wretched women who dwelt in that neighbourhood. The sisterhood arose out of the House of Mercy, of which Harriet Monsell became the head. Clewer was an experiment. The organizers had to feel their way. The work grew and grew, and homes and mission-houses were gradually formed in various parts of London and elsewhere. Clewer was begun about 1849. Some three years previously Miss Sellon had founded her sisterhood at Plymouth. After Clewer came the establishment of All Saints', Margaret Street, and following on that East Grinstead. It is worth noting that the sisterhoods founded by the Anglican Church were much larger than their Roman Catholic prototypes on the Continent. A sisterhood with sixty or seventy sisters was very seldom to be found out of England.

The life of the Anglican sisters is not unlike that of the mediæval nuns, who were at liberty to go abroad and perform their works of mercy. It has been strenuously asserted that there is a striking difference between the sisterhoods of the Roman and those of the Anglican churches. The late Bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Wordsworth, urged this point with a good deal of insistence. He remarks on the freedom of action and the absence of seclusion in the lives of the Anglican sisters, as compared with the restraints imposed on the Virgins of the Early Church. Between the days of St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and St. Jerome and the present century there is perhaps little analogy. A better comparison is found with the nuns of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, whose work among the poor outside the walls of the nunnery has a good deal of correspondence with the work carried on now by members of sisterhoods. The term is a new one.

"The word sisterhood has no correlative in the terminology of the ancient Greek or Latin Church. It is unknown to both; it would not be possible to translate it by any word used by either. The ancient Church had its Widows, it had its Virgins, it had Deaconesses, but it had no Sisterhoods in the modern sense of the term." *

* Wordsworth, "Sisterhoods and Vows."

Anglican sisterhoods, whatever they may have afterwards become, arose, professedly, out of the need existing for women of practical piety to battle with the ills that were poisoning the community. Certainly Clewer was formed in this way. It was the constant presence of so many stained, miserable lives which inspired devoted women to band themselves into a sisterhood, as has been already indicated.

There is among communities of this kind a tendency to exalt the individual over the general good—that is, to make discipline of more importance than deeds, to revert to the old misconception that everything should be made subservient to personal salvation, which was to be attained by the curious method of neglecting obvious duties to satisfy imaginary spiritual claims. The multiplication of rules, the punishments inflicted for trifling infringements, the self-mortification and penances, are among the evidences of this spirit, which regards all practical work as a means to one end, viz. the purification of the soul of the worker. This is the danger of sisterhoods, but one which the broader religious outlook of the Anglican Church in modern times has done much to check.

The re-establishment of the religious orders was not wholly a clerical movement. It was due

very much to a strong desire among a certain section of the laity to bring the Anglican Church into more correspondence with the Church of the early centuries of the Christian era, by the revival of ancient forms and systems.

"No one," wrote Frederick Denison Maurice, in 1863, "can be ignorant that much of the craving for Sisterhoods among us arises from the feeling that if we had them we should be more like our neighbours; that our insular prejudices deprive us of a blessing which other people possess; that we wickedly drove out nuns from their convents in the days of Henry VIII.; that now in the days of Queen Victoria we are feeling the want of them and must get them back if we can."

Many women doubtless entered sisterhoods out of a desire to escape from the frivolities of fashionable life, and to follow their bent for charitable works unfettered by the restraints of chaperonage which governed their circles. There may also have been a longing among women of a certain type for a life of rule in an organized community, where they would constantly enjoy priestly guidance. A writer in the year 1866 asserted that—

"Clerical advice, clerical companionship, and clerical ministrations are essential to the happiness of the large majority even of highly educated women."

The women who embraced conventual life were,

generally speaking, well educated; they belonged to a cultivated class; some were women of an exceptionally high order of mind, like Harriet Monsell; but it cannot be said that the *majority* of highly educated women showed, even at the height of the movement, that clerical advice, companionship, and ministration were essential to their happiness.

Other things combined to spur on the sisterhood movement. There was a great need for organized works of philanthropy; women had been working individually, but what was wanted was associated work—work, that is, which would have the cohesion and persistency that comes from its being subject to rule and guidance. In 1866 there was a suggestion in favour of placing hospitals under the charge of sisters; the experiment was tried at University and King's College Hospitals, and proved eminently successful.

Various circumstances combined to favour the growth of sisterhoods. The Evangelical party, who had no sympathy with the movement, were lapsing into quietude after a period of activity, and the High Church party were coming into prominence. Women were drawn towards a movement that united religion with philanthropy. It satisfied their emotions, and provided a vent for their energies.

In the middle of the century there were much fewer outlets for women's religious zeal. Even ordinary church work was, compared with the present day, undeveloped, and the sisterhood system combined the fascination of antiquity with the freshness of novelty. It was old, and yet new; based on authority, but untried.

Although the revival of the religious orders excites antagonism among a large party in the Church, and the independent authority which conventual houses are apt to assume is regarded with disfavour, the significance of this movement as a sign of the Church's activity is not diminished. A movement which has so penetrated social life cannot be regarded as the mere ebullition of a sect. It is not only that the attitude of the Church towards women has altered, but the attitude of the Church as a body for social work has been affected. It brought the Church earlier than would otherwise have been the case to play a prominent part in that general altruistic movement which is the characteristic feature of the last half-century.

It may be argued that it has always been the work of the Church to heal the sick, succour the needy, and raise the fallen. But during the last two centuries the Church only regarded these duties in their religious aspect. It was not a humanitarian

body. Polemics occupied the more intelligent among the ecclesiastics, and little was expected of the clergy outside the routine of services. Indifferentism on the one hand, and theological controversy on the other, kept the Church in a narrow groove.

But the position of the Church has greatly altered in the present day.

"Whatever the source from which its influence is derived, its magnitude is unquestionable. It is partly political, partly national, partly religious, and very largely social; but the aggregate of the forces it can command is so great that it must certainly be regarded as the most important factor in the ecclesiastical life of the nation. . . . The gradual sweeping away of the exclusive privileges belonging to it, as the Church by law established, has not reduced the power of the Church itself, for any loss thus sustained has been more than counterbalanced by the increase of its spiritual force. As a State institution it was never so weak as it is to-day, as a Church it was never stronger; that is, its hold of political supremacy was never so doubtful, whereas it never gave more evidence of spiritual life." *

Thorold Rogers, "Church Systems."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FREEDOM OF DISSENT.

Scope for women's activities among the Dissenting communities—Women in the pulpit—Equality of men and women in the Salvation Army—Women as missionaries—Pioneers in the mission field—Women's position in the Nonconformist churches of the present day.

CONCURRENTLY with the rise of the Sisterhood system there has been so great an enlargement of the boundaries of women's activity among Dissenters as to create almost a new era. Nonconformists, not being bound by tradition, and not being subject to priestly rule, are naturally more elastic in their methods of work than members of the Anglican Church. For women there is a wider scope. The narrowness of Dissent is chiefly theological, and does not preclude the holding of broad views in matters outside creed. The narrowness of the Church is the intolerance of a caste stifled with social prejudices. Therefore it is among Dissenters that women can work with the

greatest freedom and independence. In the Church they have always been in a state of tutelage. The movement that has done the most to utilize their energies—the re-establishment of the Religious Orders—is a movement which places the strictest bounds to individual liberty both of thought and deed.

Among Dissenting bodies now, whether Baptists, Congregationalists, or Methodists, there are very few religious offices which a woman may not fill, and there is no important work in which she does not take part, if we except the Methodist Conferences, and the question of her admission to those assemblies has already been under discussion. It is true that she is seldom seen in the pulpit, but her appearance there is in no way prohibited, and the present day is furnishing instances of the preaching power of women and its acceptancy. There were numbers of women preachers in the time of Wesley. In the care of the poor, in the mission field, both at home and abroad, in all social and educational work, women have a responsible and fully recognized share.

Whatever view may be taken of the doctrines and methods of the Salvation Army, there can be no question that of all modern religious agencies it has done the most to awaken and employ the

activities of women. Its drawing power has enabled it to enrol not merely adherents, but workers in every great city of Europe, besides vast numbers in America, Australia, and elsewhere. In fact, every member of the Salvation Army is of necessity a worker. That is the secret of its power, its incorporation of the individual with the whole. The most obscure member has a part, and is kept in touch with the central authority. In this respect the organization of the Salvation Army bears some resemblance to that of the Church of Rome.

In the Salvation Army women hold the same offices as men. Sergeants, commissioners, captains are chosen from either sex, according to the need of circumstances and the fitness of the individual. If women are expected to take an equal share of work, they are not debarred from any privilege, or deemed incapable on account of sex from fulfilling what are considered the highest functions. Among the Salvationists, as among the Quakers, women very commonly lead religious assemblies. The same principle appears to obtain among them as with the Friends, that—

"provided a woman be possessed with the endowments and qualifications proper for teaching and praying she may and ought to exercise them in publick for the edification

of the Church, and that her so doing is warrantable from Scripture and sound reason." *

No other religious body except the Quakers has thus recognized the equality of women with men. Nor can any other sect show such a commanding figure as the late Catherine Booth. There have been workers as earnest, as untiring, in other religious bodies, but no other woman has so impressed her personality on a cause. Mrs. Booth's field of work was by no means confined to her own sex; it lay perhaps as much among men as women. But the great importance she attached to women's part in religious organizations helped to permeate the Army with the spirit of equality. It was her pride that the Salvation Army had called forth the latent energies of women, which had been disregarded by the Church through all the ages.

Among other sects the recent development of missionary enterprise has brought women to the front in a very striking way. Formerly the only women employed in the foreign mission field were the wives or other relatives of missionaries, women who, although they did a good work, were acting in a subordinate and unofficial way, and were occupied primarily with domestic duties. Now, women are what is called "set apart" for mission work with

* "Dissertation on the Liberty of Preaching."

solemn ceremonies, and are sent out as independent missionaries. The last quarter of a century has wrought a great change in this respect. It has brought a recognition of women's position as an individual responsible worker.

It is worth noting that when the Quakers started foreign missions in 1835, the first missionary was a woman—Rachel Metcalf—who went to India to assist in an industrial school established in Benares. A year previously there had been formed in England a society, composed partly of Dissenters and partly of members of the Church of England, for promoting female education in the East. It seems that we owe this early effort to an American missionary, who was greatly impressed with the need for bettering the condition of women in India and China, and pointed out how exceedingly insufficient were the wives of missionaries to cope with the mass of ignorance existing in those countries amongst the female population.

Of late years to education of the mind has been added the healing of the body. Numbers of medical missionaries are now sent out to the East under the ægis of religious bodies. All honour to the women who thus exile themselves, and endure toil and hardship in the name of religion and humanity. But considering the difficulties

which face all women doctors in India, their loneliness and responsibility, it would seem better if we followed the example of our American cousins, and sent only thoroughly qualified physicians. Surely one profession at a time is enough for a woman, especially a profession which demands such arduous labour and unremitting attention as the study of medicine.

As was noted above, the only women who for many years ventured into the foreign mission field were the missionaries' wives, who were encumbered with household cares. But very valuable was the work done by these pioneers—women like Mrs. Margaret Wilson, who learnt the Marathee language in order to start schools, and Mrs. Braidwood, who some twelve years later, that is, in 1841, opened a school for Caste girls in Madras. As early as 1819 the Baptist missionaries' wives in Bengal were at work instructing the natives, and an East Indian lady who had profited by their classes conceived the idea, which was put into execution, of organizing some means of education for girls in Calcutta. A society was formed under the name of the Calcutta Female Juvenile Society for the Education of Native Females. The educationists appear to have been in advance of the missionary societies in drawing women into their ranks as independent

workers, for in 1821 the British and Foreign School Society sent out an unmarried woman to Calcutta to start schools. This was Miss Cooke, who was very successful in her work. The great point was to get the girls. There were schools for boys, but nothing was being done to educate the girls. Miss Cooke's first pupil was a little girl who had tried to gain admittance to a boys' school. In course of time Miss Cooke established twenty-two schools, with four hundred girls, in Calcutta.

Miss Newell went out to Malacca on an educational mission in 1827, opening her school with one girl, but by the third day she had fifteen. Miss Thornton, who was the first missionary sent out from the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East; Miss Alderney, who worked under great difficulties in Java for five years; Miss Grant, who was stationed at Singapore, and others might be mentioned as women pioneers in educational and missionary work abroad.

The religious world has been greatly affected by the forward movement among women. In the first half of the century, when it was very unusual to see women engaging in any public work except as auxiliaries to an association of men, when women speakers and lecturers were almost unknown, when travelling was more difficult and costly, women's

part in religious work was circumscribed not only by practical difficulties, but by tradition and custom. Public opinion was against women taking independent lines. In the Church tradition and custom were a greater restraint upon women's action than among the undenominational bodies. The Church followed the lead of the Nonconformists in missionary enterprise as in the foundation of Sunday-schools. It was the Baptists who were the first to start foreign missions, through the instrumentality of the famous William Carey. This was in 1792. Foreign missionaries were not sent out by the Church of England until some years later.

The position which women now hold in Nonconformist churches is a much more independent and responsible one than formerly. They work on lines laid down by themselves. They form and carry on societies, conduct meetings and services, and transact a large amount of business in connection with church work. The practical ability developed by more rational education has made enthusiasm effective in directions unthought of before. Both paid and voluntary offices, high and low, are held by women as a matter of course, where formerly only men were seen. Through the zeal and activity of women new departments of work have been created, new fields of enterprise

opened up, and the social work of the churches largely increased. In religious, as in other matters, women have found a new inheritance of labour.

Among members of the Anglican communion as much activity prevails, but somewhat less independence. The details are carried out by women, but there is more reliance on priestly authority, more reference to priestly guidance.

As no attempt is being made in these pages to sketch the history of religious movements, but only to indicate the position of women in relation both to the Anglican Church and the Dissenting Communities, anything like a chronological survey would be out of place. Only such points have been touched upon as serve to show the place women have occupied, the changes of thought and custom that have taken place, and the way in which they have affected women. The whole religious life of the country has entered upon a new phase during the last fifty years. The outward forms have undergone great alteration. Much more pains are bestowed upon the services and the appearance of the building. This applies to both Anglicans and Dissenters. A wider conception obtains of the duties of the clergy and ministers. Every religious organization has attached to it a quantity of work of a secular character. There is

a larger scope for the energies of women than ever existed before among Protestant churches. And with this increased activity has grown up, necessarily, the system of associated work. Formerly the world was moved by the enthusiasm of individuals. Now it is moved by a combination of forces, the massing together of units into one great whole.

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CHAPTER XIV.

WOMAN AS NURSE.

Nursing only recently made a profession—Miss Nightingale on the lack of training—Want of trained nurses in workhouses—Origin of the Nurses' Training Institution at St. Thomas's Hospital—Work of the sisterhoods—The early hospitals at religious houses—Treatment of lepers—Decline of nursing—The Crimean War period—Ancient and modern conception of nursing—The Franco-German War and Mrs. Dacre Craven—James Hinton on nursing—The Royal National Pension Fund—Miss Twining and workhouse nurses—Nursing as a profession for gentlewomen—Crushing out of the amateur.

IT is only within the last quarter of a century that nursing has been raised to the dignity of a profession. Every woman was supposed to be able to nurse, and the only school in which it was possible to get training was the school of experience, and this was a training bought dearly at the patient's expense. A kind of rough-and-ready knowledge was passed from hand to hand; the professional nurse, as she was called, picked up such scraps of information as she could obtain, and trusted to her own powers of intuition and

observation for the rest. Before the Crimean War there were upwards of 2500 professional nurses, but how many of these were really trained for their work? The same mistakes were repeated time after time, because there was no one to point them out.

The nurse, wrote Miss Nightingale, in 1861,—

"has neither instruction nor training; and she comes to her duty with all her experience to learn and nobody qualified to enlighten her. Everywhere this want is felt."

Such half-knowledge as she had received only wedded her the more firmly to customs and methods of treatment which defied the laws of health. It was not supposed that nurses required any special training. The assumption was that they would find things out for themselves, the prevailing opinion being that there was very little to learn. As Miss Nightingale said:—

"Sickness is everywhere. Death is everywhere. But hardly anywhere is the training necessary to relieve sickness, to delay death. We consider a long education and discipline necessary to train our medical man; we consider hardly any training at all necessary for our nurse, although how often does our medical man himself tell us, 'I can do nothing for you unless your nurse will carry out what I say.'"

To this day the unhappy patients in the workhouse infirmaries are, in many country places,

nursed by pauper inmates, who are told off to this duty much as they would be told off to scrubbing and sweeping. Until very recently there was only one trained nurse to be found among all the workhouses in the whole county of Devon.

There is no need to repeat the story of the Crimea, to record the heroic labours of Miss Florence Nightingale, or to do more than point out that it was she who created a new epoch in nursing annals. The revelation then made stirred the public to action. When Miss Nightingale returned from the Crimea a large sum of money was presented to her, with which she founded the Nurses' Training Institution at St. Thomas's Hospital. While this scheme was in process of development the Sisterhoods began to work. First in the field was St. John's, Norfolk Street, Strand, and then came the sisters of All Saints', Margaret Street, of East Grinstead, and of St. Peter. The nurses trained at the Sisterhoods were sent to the hospitals and also to private cases. Thus the Church once more took up the work which it had so long laid aside.

In pre-Reformation days the care of the sick was a religious duty; the monastery infirmary was the earliest form of hospital; the monks and nuns were skilled in the healing art, and to them resorted

the poor of the neighbourhood and travellers stricken with illness by the wayside. In the age of pilgrimages hospitals were established along the line of route, but during visitations of the plague the people of England died by hundreds untended. For lepers there were lazarettos outside the towns of mediæval Europe, and charitable people gave their alms for these outcasts of society. But who ministered to them no one knows, and except for the occasional offices of some good Samaritan they must have dragged out their miserable lives without succour. Within the present century the Moravians, both men and women, have been at work among the lepers in the East.

After the Reformation there followed a long period of apathy with regard to philanthropic work. The old customs were broken up; the mediæval spirit, which still lingered up to the sixteenth century, and which found expression in various forms of charity and benevolence, was gone. Fresh habits of thought were growing up; society was emerging from its primitive simplicity of life and becoming more complex. The poor were beginning to be made a charge upon the State, instead of upon private charity.

In mediæval times the care of the sick, while it was especially a duty of those who embraced the

religious life, was also a duty devolving on every woman—on the great lady in her castle, and on the peasant wife in her hovel. Some knowledge of how to treat wounds and agues became a necessity in those days of fierce fighting and unhealthy living.

In the Civil War of the seventeenth century there was plenty of opportunity for the exercise of woman's skill in medicine and surgery. The sick and wounded must have suffered terribly, for no ambulance corps existed, and only chance help reached the disabled soldiers. This is well brought out in the touching story of Lady Anne Halkett, then Mistress Murray, ministering to the soldiers she passed after the battle of Dunbar, while travelling with the Countess of Dunfermline to Kinross. On the road Mistress Anne saw two wounded men in need of help, and told them to follow to her lodging in Kinross, where she would assist them. They not only obeyed, but brought with them twenty more of their suffering comrades. During the few days Mistress Anne spent at Kinross she says :—

"I believe threescore was the least that was dressed by me and my woman and Ar. Ro. [whose identity is not further described], who I imployed to such as was unfit for me to dress; and besides the plaisters or balsams I applied, I gave every one of them as much with them as might dress them

three or four times, for I had provided myself very well of things necessary for that imployment, expecting they might be useful. . . . Of all these poor soldiers, there was few of them had ever been drest from the time they received their wounds until they came to Kinrose, and then itt may be imagined they were very noisome; but one particularly was in that degree, who was shot through the arme, that none was able to stay in ye roome, but all left mee. Accidentally a gentleman came in, who seeing me (nott without reluctancy) cutting off the man's sleeve of his doublet, w^{ch} was hardly fit to be touched, hee was so charitable as to take a knife and cutt itt off and fling (it) in ye fire."

These merciful actions of Lady Halkett were reported to the King and Council, and led to provision being made for the wounded soldiers in several towns. "And the King was pleased," writes Lady Halkett, simply, "to give mee thanks for my charity." *

Women were forced to become nurses and do the best they could, often without the aid of physicians. Perhaps this was not much to be regretted, considering the state of medical knowledge among so-called professors of medicine. It is difficult to separate the nurse from the doctor. She so frequently combined both offices.

Now while medicine advanced, slowly it is true, into a formulated science, and at the same time

* "Autobiography of Lady Halkett."

passed out of the hands of women, the doctor assumed a greater importance, and the nurse fell more and more into the background. The nurse's functions were looked on as quite subordinate, and it was treated as comparatively of little moment by whom they were performed; if a doctor were in attendance to give directions, it was thought a sufficient safeguard for the patient. The most ignorant and repulsive women were suffered to wait upon the sick, upon whom untold tortures were, in consequence, inflicted.

It was, perhaps, necessary that nursing should be reduced to the lowest point of degradation in order to create the revulsion. After making the term "hospital nurse" one of reproach, after letting our soldiers die in the trenches for lack of aid, we awoke to a realization of our folly and ignorance, and proceeded to establish nursing on a different footing.

Miss Nightingale, it will be remembered, spent more than a year and a half in the Crimea. In answer to certain questions put to her by the commissioners appointed to inquire into the sanitary condition of the army, she stated that during the first six months of the campaign the mortality among the soldiers from disease alone was sixty per cent. per annum, a rate higher than

that during the time of plague among the population of London. But with proper attention matters improved so much that in the last six months of the war the mortality had gone down almost to the rate of that among the Guards at home, who were supposed to be in health. Including nuns and Anglican sisters, there were altogether with Miss Nightingale a band of forty nurses.

In mediæval times nursing was a religious and a domestic exercise; in the present day it is a science and a profession. It has passed out of the domain of philanthropy and has become a means of living to thousands of women. There is no calling, except that of teaching, which they have followed more eagerly. Men have for the most part stood aloof and been content not to enter the lists, though there is no reason why they should not be systematically trained to attend upon their own sex. Male nurses in the male wards of the hospitals would be a very desirable addition. But, as it is, nursing is left practically in the hands of women.

The Sisterhoods worked quietly on, doing good service during the cholera epidemic of 1866; and eventually the East London Nursing Society was formed, the first society established in London for the benefit of the poor. During the progress of

the Crimean War, when public opinion was being stirred on the subject of nursing, a plan was formed for training the pauper women employed in workhouse infirmaries. The Liverpool Training Home for Nurses was started in 1863, and a system of district nursing among the poor established. Before this period there was very little demand for really good nurses. The public were so ignorant on the subject of sick nursing that they placidly put up with the unskilled ministrations to which they were accustomed.

Then came, in 1870, the Franco-German War, and Miss Florence Lees, afterwards Mrs. Dacre Craven, volunteered to go to the front. In company with two other nurses, she proceeded to Metz, and was put in charge of the second fever station of the Tenth Army Corps. She spent eight weeks in a hospital nursing eighty patients with typhus fever, under the worst conditions, without appliances of any kind.* Miss Lees was one of the first ladies trained at St. Thomas's Hospital as a Nightingale Probationer, and subsequently worked at the Deaconesses' Institutions at Kaiserwerth and at Dresden, and in the military hospitals at Vincennes and Val de Grace. She was also for some months in charge of the wards at King's Cross Hospital,

* Baroness Burdett-Coutts, "Woman's Mission."

so she went to the work backed up by a varied experience. It was in the year 1870 that the Duke of Westminster founded the Metropolitan and National Nursing Association at Bloomsbury Square. It was in this year, also, that there appeared from the pen of the late James Hinton a paper in the *Cornhill Magazine*, on "Nursing as a Profession." Hitherto it had not been regarded in that light; Miss Nightingale's great philanthropic enterprise, and the work of the sisters in the various Sisterhoods, had not caused nursing to be regarded as a calling by which educated women, ladies by birth, might earn a living.

"It is considered," wrote James Hinton, "though an excellent and most respectable vocation, not one for a lady to follow as a means of livelihood, unless she is content to sink a little in the social scale. . . . Can any one think it is, in its own nature, more menial than surgery? Could any occupation whatever call more emphatically for the qualities characteristically termed professional, or better known as those of the gentleman and the lady? . . . Here is a profession, truly a profession, equal to the highest in dignity, open to woman in which she does not compete with men."

Since that time nursing has passed entirely out of the hands of the amateur and the untrained. Nurses are now an organized, compact body, fully equipped and certificated. The report of the

Council of the Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses, which appeared in the Money article of the *Times* on March 13, 1895, shows that every year more pension policies are issued, there being 556 in 1894 as against 497 in 1893. A steady advance has been made in the sickness assurance branch, and on the pension side 610 proposals were dealt with as against 533 in 1893. One of the original members of the Council was the late deputy-governor of the Bank of England, Mr. Clifford Wygram.

Through the efforts of Miss Louisa Twining and others, a movement was set on foot for supplying trained nurses to workhouses, and though much remains to be done in this direction, a great reform has been effected in the management of workhouse infirmaries. Whether in their own homes or in public institutions, the poor now enjoy skilled attendance which half a century ago the richest man could not command. Of all the careers open to women nursing is the only one which has met with no opposition from men. In every other profession, when women have wished to qualify for the higher branches, they have encountered obstacles created by prejudice. But nursing, in which the rewards are smaller, has been deemed so peculiarly their province that they have been encouraged instead of being retarded in their progress.

It may, perhaps, be a matter of regret to some to reflect that what once was a pious exercise has now become a means of livelihood, an every-day calling by which thousands of women support themselves. The halo which surrounded the ministering nun does not shine over the keen, business-like, modern woman, who views sickness, not as a visitation from Heaven to be averted by prayer and fasting, but as a calamity of man's own making, to be dealt with like loss of fortune, or any other worldly evil. But the air of sanctity which once attached to nursing was effectually dispelled by the Sarah Gamps and Betsy Prigs of more modern times, who now, however, have almost become extinct.

Like other professions, that of nursing includes many classes. It levels distinctions and unites the most widely severed ranks. It is the one calling in which a gentlewoman can engage without the least fear of losing caste. In spite of the great advance in thought and the change of sentiment which has made work honourable, there are still people who are a little ashamed to own that their sisters and daughters are earning their living as governesses or clerks. But nobody minds confessing to being a nurse, because ladies of title and old family are frequently found in the nursing ranks, as

volunteers it may be, but also as paid workers. As soon as women of the educated classes took up nursing, the calling was at once raised from a menial occupation to one of dignity, not merely because of the higher social status of the nurses, but because it was a calling which involved the exercise and training of the intellectual faculties, and was an art to be studied with much pains before proficiency could be attained.

Nursing has hovered on the borderland which divides philanthropy from every-day business. Like religious work, it is a compound. The nurse, however, has an advantage over the priest or preacher, for while he is obliged to profess a certain enthusiasm for his work—the cure of souls—she is permitted to regard hers—the cure of bodies—from a strictly business point of view ; and, in fact, although tenderness and sympathy are invaluable qualities, the more she can avoid absorbing her patients' troubles the better able will she be to perform her duties.

Nursing affords one of the most striking examples of the way in which the amateur is being crushed out of existence. If there were one thing more than another which women felt themselves competent to undertake without any training or special knowledge, it was the care of their sick relatives and friends. A governess must at least

have passed through some educational ordeal, and be able to show certain accomplishments, even in the pre-examination days, before she would dare to offer her services; a would-be clerk must know something of accounts; an amanuensis must be able to spell and to write legibly. But the only qualification deemed necessary for a nurse was willingness. To like doing a thing was long thought a sufficient guarantee of capability, and the people who professed to have a taste for music or painting were allowed free play with their friends' ears and eyes. Women who were ignorant of the laws of health, and of the elementary rules of nursing, who did not even know how to ventilate a room properly, or how to make a bed without disturbing the patient, assumed the office of nurse without any misgivings.

We are now rushing into the other extreme. There is so much talk about sanitation and hygiene, there are so many lectures delivered on the subject of nursing, and so much is written in popular form about the manifestations of disease, that the public is perforce, to a certain extent, educated in the treatment of the body. But it has become afraid of dealing with the complex mechanism which is so constantly discussed and paraded. People have learned enough to make them nervous. They are

now as much afraid of doing wrong as they were sure in former times of doing right. The amateur has lost confidence in herself. In the presence of so much trained skill she feels hopelessly at fault. Regular nurses are more in demand than ever. Slight cases of illness are handed over to the professional attendant. No doubt in time we shall strike the medium course. It is not impossible that nursing will eventually be regarded as a branch of ordinary education, and that a year or two's training in hospital or infirmary will follow the school and college course. We may revert to the habit of mediæval times, when the care of the sick was regarded as one of the normal duties belonging to womanhood, and skill in medicine and surgery one of the first things for a woman to acquire.

CHAPTER XV.

WOMAN AS DOCTOR.

Medicine the only one of the learned professions open to women—Women students of medicine in Italy—Midwifery in England—Witchcraft and medicine—Midwives of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—Female surgeons—The modern medical movement—Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell—Dr. Garrett Anderson—Dr. Sophia Jex-Blake and the fight in Edinburgh—The London School of Medicine—Public appointments held by women.

MEDICINE is the only one of the learned professions open to women in England. The Law and the Church are both closed, though certain branches of the Law are practised by women, such as conveyancing, and the highest religious functions are exercised by women among Dissenting communities. But a woman cannot take Orders, cannot qualify either as a barrister or a solicitor. She can, however, become an M.D., but it is only within the last quarter of a century that women have been admitted to the ranks of accredited medical practitioners. Yet as far back as we can trace our history women are to be found exercising, without credentials, the

office of physician. This aroused great enmity, not only on the part of the male doctors, but also from the Church, which was accustomed to deal with disease as if it were a demon to be exorcised by prayer. In the Middle Ages, says Michelet—

"the art of medicine was practised only with holy water at the church door. Thither on Sundays, after the service, would come a crowd of sick." *

It was dangerous for a woman to display medical knowledge. She was instantly put down as a witch.

"Male physicians not skilful enough to cure disease would deliberately swear that there could be but one reason for their failure—the use of witchcraft against them." †

In the reign of Henry V. a petition was presented praying "that no women use the practyse of fisyk under payne of long emprisonment."

The herbalists, both men and women, excited the enmity of the regular leech, and were sometimes molested for using their powers. In the thirty-fourth year of the reign of Henry VIII. an Act was passed for the relief of—

"diverse honest persons, as well men as women, whom God hathe endued with the knowledge of the nature, kind and operacon of certeyne herbes, rotes, and waters and the

* "La Sorcière."

† Gage, "Woman, Church, and State."

using and ministering them to such as be payned with customable diseases,"

that they might practise their calling "without sute, vexation, penaltie, or losse of their goods." As herbalists women practised medicine while it was in an empirical stage, before it had been formulated into a science, but as it grew into a profession of dignity and importance they ceased to bear their part. This was inevitable, for there were no means of study and training open to women as there were to men.

In Italy matters were differently ordered. But then Italy was far in advance of England all through the Middle Ages—and, indeed, much later. There were in the year 1500 sixteen universities in Italy. In the School of Medicine established at Salerno by Benedictine monks in the twelfth century women were admitted as students, and learned their art and practised medicine among both sexes. They also became lecturers in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Coming down to the eighteenth century, we find a woman holding the chair of anatomy at Bologna Institute. But in England they never held any recognized position except as midwives until this century. In the Middle Ages medicine ranked more as a trade than a profession. In 1345 the apothecaries and grocers were united, and remained so until 1617, and the

union of barbers with surgeons is well known. Women were members of the Barber Surgeons' Company.

One branch of the physician's art—that of midwifery—was entirely in the hands of women down to the sixteenth century, when, at the time of the establishment of the Royal College of Physicians in London, in 1518, it began to be practised by men, and in 1603 there is a record of at least one male doctor who included it in his practice. It is recorded that midwives were authorized by the bishops to baptize infants at their birth, if circumstances made it necessary that the ceremony should be performed without delay, and this practice, which lasted from the tenth to the seventeenth century, only fell into disuse on account of the opposition of the Puritans. One of the most curious petitions ever presented to the House of Commons was that sent up in 1646, styled, "The Midwives' Just Complaint," about the miseries caused by the Civil War.

The sanction of the Church was given to the midwife's art. Andrew Borde, writing in the sixteenth century, says :—

"In my tyme, as well here in Englande as in other regions, and of olde antiquitie, every midwife shulde be presented with honest women of great gravitie to the Bishop, and that they shulde testify for her that they do

present shulde be a sadde woman, wyse and discrete, havynge experience, and worthy to have the office of a midwife. Than the Byshoppe, with the counsel of a doctor of Physick, ought to examine her, and to instructe her in that thynge that she is ignorant; and thus proved and admitted is a laudable thynge; for and this were used in Englande, there shulde not half so many women myscary, nor so many chyldren perish in every place in Englande as there be. The Byshop ought to loke on this matter."

A male doctor who took up this branch of surgery was not thought of high repute, and did not attain to any position until towards the end of the eighteenth century. Up to 1750 obstetrics were in the hands of women.

"The medical art of the Middle Ages busied itself peculiarly about the man, a being noble and pure, who alone could become a priest, alone could make God at the altar. It also paid some attention to the beasts, beginning indeed with them; but of children it thought seldom; of women not at all." *

The belief in sorcery and witchcraft which was almost universal threw discredit on women doctors. There was nothing that was more easily confounded with evil than the treatment of disease, for the ignorance of the causes of almost all classes of complaints was as widespread as the complaints themselves. Sick people were commonly thought to be possessed with an evil spirit. The theory of

* Michelet, "La Sorcière."

obsession was in full operation. In Boorde's "Breviarie of Health," published in 1598, is a chapter on the "Demoniake Person who is possessed of or with the divell or divells," as a person afflicted with some common form of disease. On the principle of like curing like, those who could cure sickness were thought to be possessed of some magical power. Bishop Bonner wrote in 1554:—

"A midwife shall not use or exercise any witchcrafte, charmes, sorcerie, invocations, or praiers, other than such as be allowable and may stand with the lawes and ordinances of the Catholick Church."

The highest authorities, medical as well as ecclesiastical, were infected with the superstition as to the power of witches and evil spirits, and as late as the middle of last century were found joining their voices to those of the clergy in denouncing unbelievers as heretics.* What strengthened the belief in the supernatural power of the so-called witch-doctors was the use which they made of poisons. They converted the juices of the belladonna and other plants into powerful medicines. To the ignorant multitude it was miraculous that things known to be noxious should serve to allay pain. There was a great dread of poisoning all through the Middle Ages. It was a common form

* Chaillé, "Address on Medical Jurisprudence."

of murder, and who so able to furnish the means as the witch or wise-woman? If she could cure she could also kill. Between the jealousy of the leech, who feared a rival, and the universal belief in witchcraft, women who undertook to heal were in a difficult and dangerous position.

The midwife was, in fact, the only accredited woman doctor, and she had her place in Royal bedchambers. In 1496, Margaret Cobbe was paid £10 by the Crown for professional attendance on Elizabeth Woodville, at the birth of Edward V. Alice Massey received the same payment for similar services to Elizabeth of York, wife of Henry VII., in 1503. Sometimes the Church and sometimes the Crown was the licensing authority. Thus Jane Scarisbryche received a licence to practice from the Bishop of Chester in 1578, and Queen Elizabeth is said to have granted licences.

A skilful midwife in the reigns of Charles II. and James II. was Mrs. Elizabeth Celleor, a somewhat remarkable character, who underwent imprisonment, paid a fine of £1000, and stood in the pillory for the part she played in the Meal Tub Plot, a scheme of the Papists supposed to be aimed against Charles II. Mrs. Celleor,or Cellier, as her name is sometimes spelled, used to visit and minister to the women prisoners in Newgate. She also

formulated a scheme for the foundation of a Royal hospital and for the maintenance of a corporation of midwives. She wrote out her views at length, and submitted the paper to King James II. in 1687. It filled nine folio pages. She pointed out first the enormous sacrifice of life, both among the mothers and infants, owing to the ignorance of the midwives, and proposed that the most skilful among them should be formed into a corporation, after being proved competent, and be subject to visitation by persons armed with Royal authority. They were to be instructed by means of lectures given monthly by the principal physician of the hospital.

Here we have a forerunner of the modern system of registration. Mrs. Celleor proposed that the fees paid by the midwives for admittance into this corporation should be applied to the erection of a foundling hospital, and subsequently to the maintenance and education of the children brought up there. She goes minutely into the constitution of the said hospital, and enumerates the various mistresses and other officers, male and female, who should be appointed. There was to be a female secretary, "a woman sufficiently skilled in writing and accounts." Her duties were—

"to be present at all controversies about the art of Midwifery, to register all the extraordinary accidents

happening in the practice, which all licensed midwives are from time to time to report to the Society."

In rank the female secretary came next to the "Governess," who was the head of the institution, and was to be regarded as an "Assistant to the Government." One of the rules was—

"that the man register and Secretary of the House be under the command and direction of the whole Government thereof for all business, except the art of midwifery, which is to be meddled with by none but the governess, female secretary, Man midwife and their Assistants."

In 1642 licences were granted at Chirurgeons' Hall, the examining board being "six skilful midwives." After the passing of the Act of Uniformity licences were conferred at Doctors Commons, where, according to Mrs. Celleor—

"they pay their money (take an oath which it is impossible for them to keep) and return home as skilful as they went thither."

In 1671 one of these licensed midwives, Mrs. Jane Sharp, published a book, the first by a woman on midwifery, which passed into four editions. The authoress set forth the disadvantages which women were under through not having access to the instruction in anatomy afforded by the Universities to male doctors. In the next century Mrs. Stephens, who attended Queen Charlotte, wrote a work

called "The Domestic Midwife," which has been characterized by Dr. Aveling as "perhaps the best book on the subject written by any woman in our own language."

Madame Siebold, who was so distinguished for her skill that the University of Giessen bestowed on her the degree of M.D., attended both the Duchess of Kent and the Duchess of Coburg, mother of the Prince Consort. Indeed most of the Royal ladies of the house of Hanover engaged the services of women, Queen Victoria being the notable exception.

Between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were several noted midwives, such as the clever daughter of Dr. Percy Willughby, Mrs. French, and Mrs. Sarah Hastings, whose names appear in the "Philosophical Transactions" for 1694, but their practice must have been largely empirical for want of the means of obtaining definite instruction. London had no Hôtel Dieu, the best school of midwifery in Europe, in which were trained Madame Tertre and Madame Lovys Bourgeois, both of whom wrote books on midwifery, and for a long while it was considered quite improper for works on that subject to be written in English. And yet it was extremely unusual for a male physician to attend cases of childbirth. In

the Middle Ages it was the witch who was sent for; in later times, down to the end of the last century, it was the midwife, who got her knowledge as best she could by tradition and practice. There was a very strong feeling, and one which seems perfectly natural and right, against the presence of men. On one occasion when the Miss Willughby mentioned above was anxious to have the advice of her father in an extremely critical case that gentleman was afraid to venture openly into the room. "At my daughter's request," he says, "unknown to the lady, I crept into the chamber on my hands and knees." This was about 1658, and 150 years later a famous midwifery professor, more than once, it is said, had to use similar secrecy.

As medical science has advanced, women, being debarred from access to the newer knowledge, and shut out from all places of instruction, were superseded by men. One modern discovery—the use of anæsthetics—has quite revolutionized obstetrics. The witches are said to have had drugs which lulled the sufferer into unconsciousness, but medical science knew little or nothing of anæsthetics until recent times. The prejudice against their use was very strong, and it was regarded as an act of impiety for a woman to seek to avoid the pains incident to childbirth, which were her natural inheritance.

In the last century there were several women noted for their skill in surgery and medicine. They would now be looked upon as mere quacks, but in their day achieved a good deal of success. There was Mrs. Joanna Stephens, who proclaimed that she had found some wonderful remedy for a very painful disease, and obtained a grant from Parliament of £5000. Mrs. Mapp, the bone-setter, called by the name of "Crazy Sally," was so popular that the authorities of the town of Epsom offered her £100 a year to remain in that neighbourhood. She used to come to town in her carriage, and receive patients at the Grecian Coffee House. Such a noted character did she become, that the managers of Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre sent her a special request to attend a certain performance, with the object of drawing an audience. Mrs. Mapp complied, and on October 16, 1736, there was a full house.

There was another woman who, some years later, won repute as a surgeon. Miss Catherine Hutton writes in 1788—

"I saw in the newspaper the advertisement of a 'noted surgeon called Ellen Haythornthwaite' . . . who is supposed to be one of the best surgeons in the country. She has performed several amazing cures given up for being incurable. . . . She will take nothing in hand if she finds it incurable. Her charges are also very moderate; only

twelve pence a week if they come to her. She travels none abroad."

At the end of the last century several women graduated at the Italian Universities, notably at Bologna. Mme. Laura Bassi, for example, held the Chair of Natural Philosophy at Bologna, where she graduated in 1732. She was described as having "le visage doux, sérieux, modeste." Her funeral was celebrated with public honours. There seems no evidence that Paris ever closed its doors after the manner of Great Britain.

Quite early in the present century another attempt was made to bring women who practised obstetrics under some form of registration. The Society of Apothecaries tried to pass an enactment for the examination and control of midwives; but when the subject came before Parliament, a Committee of the House of Commons decided "that it would not allow any mention of female midwives."

Up to the middle of this century women, although debarred from acquiring the medical knowledge accessible to men, were not disqualified as practitioners by any legal prohibition. But when the Medical Act of 1858 was passed the whole circumstances changed. There was no distinction of sex made in the Act, but the conditions, which required a doctor to qualify by passing the

examinations of one of the existing medical boards, effectually shut out women, for the nineteen boards, with one consent, refused to admit them. The only exceptions to this decree were in favour of persons, male or female, who had already obtained a foreign degree, and had been practising prior to the passing of the Act. It was thus that Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell was able to get her name placed on the register. Miss Elizabeth Garrett (now Dr. Garrett-Anderson), who began her studies two years after registration had been made compulsory, was also enrolled, but, as will be seen, by a difficult and costly process, and one which was impossible for any future aspirant.

There was only one examining board to whose lectures it was possible for Miss Garrett to gain admittance. This was the Society of Apothecaries, who, after taking legal advice, consented to admit her on payment of ten—and even twenty—times the ordinary fees * for the lectures to be given to her separately. The Society probably supposed that Miss Garrett would either refuse such an exorbitant demand, or that if she agreed and attended the lectures she would fail to pass. But neither of these things happened. Miss Garrett paid the

* Address by Dr. Sophia Jex-Blake, "The Practice of Medicine by Women."

money, heard the lectures, and at the end of the five years' course passed all the examinations; in 1865 her name was placed on the British Register. But the Society, terrified at the consequences, made a decree forbidding students to receive private instruction, in order to shut out any women who might be tempted to follow Miss Garrett's example. For the necessary hospital teaching Miss Garrett went to Middlesex Hospital, but after passing with special distinction some of the *viva voce* examinations, an application for her removal from the Hospital was made by the students, and actually granted by the authorities. Miss Garrett subsequently went to Paris, where in 1870 she obtained her degree, passing the examinations with the most brilliant success.

It must here be noted that it was impossible for women to obtain a medical degree in any part of Great Britain at that period, and medical education was equally out of the question, the Society of Apothecaries having closed its doors after Miss Garrett. And not only were women debarred from entering the profession in this country, but even if they went to the trouble and expense of graduating at a foreign university, such as Paris, Bologna, or Zurich, they would have no status as medical practitioners in England, the Registration Act of

1858 only recognizing British licences and degrees. In spite of her Paris degree, won with so much *éclat*, Miss Garrett would have had no standing had she not first become a licentiate of Apothecaries' Hall.

Matters had come to a dead-lock. There was simply no opening whatever for women in medicine. And this it was which occasioned the notable struggle in Edinburgh which will always be regarded as an era in the medical movement among women.

In 1869 Miss Sophia Jex-Blake determined to devote herself to the study of medicine. She first applied to London University, and was informed that the Charter had been purposely so worded as to exclude the possibility of examining women for medical degrees. Then she turned to Edinburgh, where, in company with four or five other ladies, she carried on for some half dozen years a battle with the authorities, who were in the end completely vanquished.

Sir James Simpson and the Dean of the Medical Faculty, as well as Professor Blackie and Professor Masson, proved immediate and staunch friends to the ladies, but when Miss Jex-Blake called upon Professor Laycock he observed that he "could not imagine *any decent woman* wishing to study

medicine; as for *any lady*, *that* was out of the question." *

The University Court having passed a resolution that "women shall be admitted to the study of medicine in the University," Miss Jex-Blake and four other ladies—Mrs. Thorne, Miss Peachey, Mrs. Evans, and Miss Chaplin—duly passed the preliminary examination in Arts prescribed for medical students. Two more ladies, Miss Anderson and Miss Bovell, entered the following year, so that there were in all seven lady students at that time, the *septem contra Edinam* as they were called. Subsequently five ladies appeared in the prize lists. Miss Peachey, as third in the chemistry prize list (and first of her year), was entitled to the Hope Scholarship, which had been founded by Dr. Hope out of the proceeds (£1000) of some chemistry lectures delivered to ladies fifty years before. Miss Peachey was not allowed, however, to hold the scholarship, on the ground that, having studied at a different hour, she was not a member of the chemistry class.

The application of the ladies for permission to study in the Infirmary was followed by a riot at Surgeons' Hall, when the *gentlemen* students of the "worser sort" collected a rowdy mob to bar the entrance of the ladies to their usual class, abused

* Dr. Sophia Jex-Blake, "Medical Women."

them in the foulest terms, and when a way had been forced in for them by wrenching open the gate, the rioters pushed in a sheep, which the lecturer remarked had more sense than those who sent it there. At the conclusion of the lecture a number of students formed themselves into a body-guard, and the ladies reached their homes unharmed, though their dresses bore the traces of the mud with which they had been pelted.

When the lady students were entering the third year of their course, their fees having been paid for three years, they were met by the declaration of the University Court that no arrangement could be made for enabling them to pursue their studies with a view to a degree. As the certificate of proficiency which was offered them instead would not be recognized by the Medical Act, there seemed no alternative but to abandon their career or raise an action of "declarator" * against the Senatus of the University, praying to have it declared that matriculated students might finish their course. The ladies took the bolder and costlier step. The Lord Ordinary decided in their favour, but the next year the Court of Session reversed the decision. The costs amounted to £848.

Parliament was next approached, but the first

* "Medical Women."

year the Bill failed to come to a second hearing, and the next year (1875) it was lost. In 1876, however, the Russell-Gurney Bill, to enable all British examining bodies to extend their examinations and qualifications to women, became law. In virtue of this, the King's and Queen's College of Physicians (Ireland) opened its doors; in 1878 all London University degrees were thrown open to women; in 1879 those of the Royal University of Ireland; in 1885 women were admitted to the Royal College of Surgeons (Ireland). It was not till 1886 that the Edinburgh authorities finally succumbed: in that year the women's classes were recommenced and the conjoint Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, both of Edinburgh and Glasgow, opened their doors to women. At the present time there are medical schools for women in the capitals of each of the three kingdoms, as also in Belfast, Glasgow, and Dundee.

The London School of Medicine for Women was established in 1874, when every other door seemed closed against women medical students. Lords Shaftesbury and Aberdare, the Bishop of Exeter, the Dowager Countess of Buchan, and the Dowager Lady Stanley of Alderley were its vice-presidents. The opening of the Royal Free Hospital, in 1877, to the students of the School

of Medicine afforded the necessary practice. The establishment, in 1885, of the Countess of Dufferin's Fund for supplying Medical Aid to the Women of India gave an impetus to the movement, and there are now in that country about fifty registered medical women. In England, Scotland, and Ireland there are nearly a hundred and thirty. One of these, Dr. Louisa Atkins, who took her degree at Zurich long before it was possible to do so in this country, was the first lady ever appointed as a resident medical officer. In 1872 she was elected to that office in the Birmingham and Midland Hospital for Women.

At present several public medical appointments are held by women. During one year alone, from October, 1893, to October, 1894, Miss Benson was appointed First Physician of the Kama Hospital, Bombay; Miss Aldrich-Blake, Assistant Anæsthetist at the Royal Free Hospital; Miss Dickson, Gynæcologist to the Richmond, Whitworth, and Hardwicke Hospitals, Dublin; and Mrs. de la Cherois and Miss Baker were appointed on the medical staff of the Butler-Boulton Provident Dispensary by the Oxford Municipality.

On January 2, 1896, at a meeting of the Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons, a resolution was carried that women should be admitted to

the diplomas of the College. There were forty-seven Fellows who voted for, and ten against, the resolution. The women who are now entering the medical profession have an open course before them. They will encounter none of the obstacles which beset the path of their predecessors in the sixties and seventies. They need fear neither opposition nor discourtesy from the medical authorities or from their professional brethren. The public, though it does not wholly approve, has grown used to the presence of the lady doctor, and has ceased to regard her as a mere social excrescence. Indeed, it is ready to admit that she has her own special place and functions, and is not necessarily a usurper of men's privileges. As time goes on the question of sex will come less into prominence, and the woman will be judged more strictly by her capacity for the work she undertakes on the same grounds as the man. It will be a competition of the talents.

CHAPTER XVI.

WOMEN AND MODERN POLITICS.

Changes of the last half-century—Women's political organizations—Women and the Primrose League—The Women's Liberal Federation—Lady Liberal-Unionists—The political education of women.

THE present century has witnessed a complete change with regard to women's attitude towards politics. It may be assumed, speaking generally, that the interest shown in the last century in political matters was confined to women of the upper classes. But quite a new development of thought has taken place during the last fifty years. At the beginning of the nineteenth century—indeed, during the first thirty or forty years—the change which was creeping in was not very noticeable. When the high-minded and accomplished Countess Canning stood so staunchly by her husband's side during the dark hour of his unpopularity while he was President of the Board of Control; when Lady Conyngham reigned supreme over the Court

of George IV.; when Lady Jersey and the Duchess of Richmond, in the same reign, were noticeable figures in the political—which was also the aristocratic—world; even down to the fifties, when Lady Palmerston was sought out by politicians at a crisis, and assisted to bring about a reconciliation between the Government and Lord Palmerston, there was very little movement among women belonging to the professional and working classes. Politics before the Victorian era were so mixed up with court life that it is difficult to keep them apart, and court life in the early part of the century was calculated to besmirch the most honest-minded politicians. Greville writes, in 1829—

"A more despicable scene cannot be exhibited than that which the interior of the Court presents—every base, low, and unwomanly propensity, with selfishness, avarice, and a life of petty intrigue and mystery."

Fifty years ago women of the middle classes regarded politics as quite out of their sphere. Except when some great question was agitating the country they thought little about public affairs. As to taking any action, attending political meetings, forming political societies for political reforms, there was no such thing, and if any such idea had been mooted it would have been looked on as

absurd and improper. The idea still lingered that politics were unfit for women to touch, that they were beyond their understanding, and dangerous to their morals. In spite of that sentiment, which still survives here and there, the causes which brought women within the radius of political activity were many and various. The political interest which animated eighteenth-century politicians was an entirely different thing from the spirit which in modern times has stirred women to such keen activity in public affairs. The women of the aristocracy were animated by private likes and dislikes, family interests and traditions, to take a part in the politics of their day. The women of the middle classes act from impersonal motives. This does not mean that they are never swayed by interest in individuals, but it is chiefly because the individual represents either a party or a principle.

Women are frequently accused of having no political principle, of being always biased by some personal preference. Without claiming for women any greater rectitude of conduct and purity of motive than men, it must be admitted that the effect on women of working in large numbers for some abstract right or for some practical end, is to create a spirit of enthusiasm for principle equal to that aroused by a personal sentiment.

The great virtue of the political feeling awakened in women of the present day is its impersonal character. Women, especially those of the middle classes, work for causes rather than men. Their position saves them from being actuated by motives of self interest, or from preferences arising from family influence and connections. Their sin is apathy, but once roused they are capable of a singleness of purpose which can only animate a few of the political aristocrats.

Women of the middle classes have at present only an indirect influence on politics. Singly they can do little or nothing, but by working in numbers they are able to exert pressure, and to advance or retard social movements. Everything tends to favour combination. It is forced upon men and women alike. The time for individual action is past.

It may be said that the personal influence of women in high places is still as strong as ever while we have such active politicians as the Marchioness of Salisbury, the Countess of Aberdeen, Lady Frances Balfour, and others whose names will readily occur. But the proof that it is not paramount lies in the fact that so much time, energy, and money are given to the promotion of political organizations. The leaders on both sides are

agreed that the only way to gain an end is by working in numbers. They are not content with talking to Ministers in drawing-rooms; they talk to the people in big halls. A political *coterie* of their own particular set is all very well, and may be useful in its way, but what they believe in are strong working committees, composed of all classes of women.

Another feature in the altered attitude of women towards politics is the striking change which has taken place in social habits. A common cause will bring together on terms of familiarity classes that formerly kept apart. It is no uncommon thing to find a countess and a woman who earns her living with her hands speaking on the same platform, and meeting together on equal terms at council boards. The upper and lower middle class, the women of the aristocracy, and the women who are proud to own that they are of the people, work together without any jar arising from differences of rank.

Politics have not effected this change, but in political movements it is most apparent. It is the political women who have made use of it as a lever, and have done so with great effect. One cannot imagine such an amalgamation in the last century. No organization that was composed of such

heterogeneous elements as are the political organizations of to-day would have held together for a month. The altered views held about the relation of class to class, the difference in modes of education and manner of life, and the common platform which has been created for women by what may be termed intellectual free thought, have been instrumental in bringing about this change. It is not merely what is called the democratic spirit which has broken through social tradition, but the broader outlook caused by interchange of opinion, circulation of knowledge, and progress in the art of living.

Whether it is or is not a good thing for women to be brought into political life, to learn to regard public questions as within their sphere of interests, and to contribute in such indirect ways as are possible under existing conditions in local and Imperial matters, is often hotly debated, as if it were a question which could be settled by argument, while all the time the women have decided for themselves.

It may be interesting to discuss the point as to whether politics have a good or bad effect on women, but it is quite as important to consider what effect women have on politics, and not the women only who are leaders in society and have the influence which comes with position and wealth, but the rank and file, who individually seem of

so little account, and who, when welded together into an organized body, are a force to be reckoned with by political thinkers and leaders.

It is only within the last decade that this question has come within the range of "practical politics." Until the formation of political associations, the women of the middle classes had very little voice in public matters. The Conservatives were the first to recognize the advantage of enlisting the services of women in some systematic way. In 1884 came the opportunity. Hitherto there had been no political organizations which admitted women, and their work and influence were unknown quantities. But all that was to be changed with the uprising of the Primrose League, which was started at the close of 1883 in a modest way. There was a society which women could join.

The idea was a masculine one. It was not a woman's movement at all, but it was one which quickly found favour with women, especially with women of the upper classes. A Ladies' Grand Council was formed, among the earliest members being the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, the Marchioness of Salisbury, Lady Randolph Churchill, Lady Wimborne, the Dowager Marchioness of Londonderry, Lady Gwendolen Cecil, and Lady Borthwick, who was the very first lady to join the

League. The system by which the League was worked was admirable for drawing numbers, and thousands of women belonging to all classes have been enrolled by the formation of "habitations" under a Dame-president.

As was said above, the Primrose League was started by men, and it has always been under masculine control. The women do not act independently, but conjointly with the men; and although in all minor matters they have full liberty of action, the final decision in all important issues rests with the heads of the League, who are men. The League is a mighty political engine, and to ensure its efficient working, individuality is to a great extent obliterated. During times of election, the habitations sink their independence, and act entirely under the advice of the political agents. Their functions are suspended. The great object of the League's existence—the advancement of the Conservative party—is always kept well to the fore, and no local or individual interests are allowed to interfere with the attainment of that end.

By the agency of the Primrose League large numbers of women who had hitherto been indifferent to politics, and had kept aloof from all public matters, have been drawn into taking some interest and share in the great questions of the day.

A step was taken towards the political education of the middle classes, and towards bringing together on a common platform different sections of society. There is, of course, the fact that a society which distributes badges and insignia, and confers titles and honours, always attracts numbers who are willing to pay for small distinctions. And the system under which the League is worked tends more to the disciplining of masses than the development of the individual mind. For this reason, although it is admirable as a piece of party mechanism, it is not so useful in cultivating the reasoning powers as an association which gives more independence to its members.

The Women's Liberal Federation presents a marked contrast to the Primrose League. Instead of the members at election times awaiting the directions of the party wire-pullers, these gentlemen have to go to the Federation and ask for their co-operation and support. It is a standing rule that no candidate whose moral character will not bear investigation is to be supported, whatever his claims as a public man. The Federation is solely a women's organization; and although it was formed for the promotion of Liberal principles, candidates who are opposed to the women's movements—such as the extension of the Parliamentary

franchise to women, the election of women to County Councils, and so on—run a risk of losing the support of the Federation if they stand for constituencies where the workers in these movements are very active. Luckily for the Liberal party, only one instance has yet occurred where a Liberal candidate, being found recalcitrant, was refused the support of the Federation on this ground. In certain cases the claims of Women's Suffrage have been waived in deference to party considerations.

The Federation is somewhat younger than the Primrose League, originating in a conference held in 1886 at the house of Mrs. Theodore Fry, in Queen Anne's Gate. As far back as 1880 Women's Liberal Associations began to be formed. The earliest were those started at Bristol, York, and Darlington, and the effort seems to have originated with those who belonged to the Peace Party—Mrs. Fry being the head of the Darlington Association and Miss Priestman of the Bristol Association.

In 1880 the Liberal ladies of South Kensington, where there is no men's association, formed themselves into a Society, without knowing at the time of the existence of the provincial associations. Then the idea of a Federation suggested itself, and the first general meeting was held in February, 1887.

The membership has now reached a total of 76,000, the number of affiliated associations being 397. For working purposes it has been found desirable to form Unions in central places. The Metropolitan Union, for instance, unites all the London associations; and when any special work has to be done in London, the Union takes the control. The County Council, the Vestry, and the School Board elections all provide a good deal of work.

When a Parliamentary election occurs, the Federation is naturally in full tide of activity. From the headquarters in London information is supplied, when required, to provincial associations respecting candidates, and advice and assistance are given, but no compulsion is exercised upon the affiliated societies. And, as has been stated already, Liberal agents are in the position of suppliants, not directors. The Federation is a greater educating power than the Primrose League, for it conduces to independence of thought and action, and teaches women self-reliance. The whole organization is managed entirely by women. It was initiated, founded, and is carried on *by* women, *among* women; and the weight which it carries with the Liberal party is a proof of the efficiency of the management and the potency of its action.

One result of the work of the Federation is to

be seen in the great development among its ranks of public speakers. The Primrose League does not encourage platform-speaking among its Dames. There are well-known Conservative ladies who are excellent speakers, like Lady Knightley, Lady Jersey, and others, who do very effective work when required. But the gift of oratory is rather the exception than the rule among Primrose Dames. They do not often find occasion for it, their work lying in other channels. The Dame-presidents do not even preside at the meetings of the habitation when there is a ruling-councillor. Among the members of the Federation, on the contrary, are numbers of exceedingly good and several eloquent speakers, both in the middle and upper classes. The Federation, like the Temperance organizations, has done much to bring out the latent gift of oratory lying unsuspected in so many women.

It has, too, in a remarkable degree been instrumental in bringing together women of all ranks in society. The Primrose League also claims to have obliterated the distinctions of rank by associating all classes in its habitations. But the Federation has gone further than the Primrose League. On the same platform, and round the same committee-table, meet countesses, honourable ladies, and women who are distinctly of the people.

At one of the great annual meetings of the Federation, which takes place in the Spring, some of the country delegates begged that the meeting should not extend beyond two days, for, as they explained to one of the hon. secretaries, Mrs. Broadley Reid, they can cook enough to last the household for the two days, and leave things ship-shape, but a third night away puts a strain on the domestic management. The present president is the Countess of Carlisle, who succeeded the Countess of Aberdeen. The office of president was filled in the first instance by Mrs. Gladstone, but it is an arduous post, requiring more time and energy than the wife of the late Prime Minister could be expected to give.

Still younger than the Federation is the Women's Liberal-Unionist Association, which was formed in 1888 to resist Home Rule. An appeal was made by the women of Ulster to their sisters in England and Scotland, and the answer to this appeal was the formation of a political association under the presidency of the late Dowager Lady Stanley of Alderley, who is almost better known for her services to the cause of women's education. The Association has thirty-six branches, and a membership of between fourteen and fifteen thousand. Unlike the two other political bodies mentioned, the Women's Liberal-Unionist Association has only one great

aim—to fight against the introduction in any shape or form of Home Rule for Ireland. The facts that Mr. Gladstone's Bill was rejected, and that the veteran chief has retired from public life, have not caused the Association to relax their efforts. Their work consists largely in stirring up public opinion against the idea of separation, and as a means of propagating Unionist principles, parties of Irish ladies were, in 1894, sent as delegates by the Association to different parts of England and Scotland to arouse interest and explain the situation from a Unionist point of view. By way of educating the workers and fortifying canvassers for their duties, discussion meetings are held, when the questions of the day are thoroughly argued out, members of Parliament assisting by giving addresses on the subjects with which they are best acquainted.

The Women's Liberal-Unionist Association, like the Federation, is purely a women's movement, founded, organized and supported by women. Among the members of the Executive Committee are Lady Frances Balfour, Miss Anstruther, Mrs. Fawcett, Lady Arthur Russell; Mrs. T. W. Russell, representing Leinster and Connaught; Miss Tod, representing Ulster; and Miss Currey, Munster.

It seems unnecessary to dwell at any length on movements which are so familiar to every one,

and whose history is recorded in their own special annuals. But in their bearing on the position of women they have an interest apart from that of party considerations. The political education of women has advanced immensely during the last decade in consequence of these organizations, and the influence of women on politics has correspondingly increased. Formerly the women of a constituency were only taken into account when they were rich and influential, and could command interest and votes by their position and connections. At the present day the women of the middle classes, by uniting together in associations, exert an influence which individually would be of little avail. At some future time they may command consideration as electors.

CHAPTER XVII.

WOMEN AND PUBLIC WORK.

Women on public boards—School Board work—Early members of the School Board—Women as Poor-law Guardians: their increased numbers—Appointment of women as Factory Inspectors—Women as Sheriffs in the time of the Plantagenets—The offices of Marshal, King's Champion, and High Constable held by women—A female Sexton—Women's capacity for public work.

THERE is one aspect of women's attitude towards politics still to be considered. It may be objected that the work done by women on public boards is not political, that the care of the sick and the poor, the education of the young, and the sanitation of a district are matters entirely apart from politics. But, broadly speaking, the whole of our local government must be regarded as a branch of politics. Civic life is political life, and the interests of one part of the nation cannot be separated from the rest. The government of the metropolis or of a provincial town, and the well-being of its people,

are as much a part of politics as a question of Indian finance.

There is, however, a distinction between imperial and local interests, and it is with the latter that women are most concerned. Since the establishment of the London School Board in 1870 women have advanced further and further into domestic politics. At that time there were no women on boards of guardians; the idea of their sitting on vestries was not mooted until many years later, and the London County Council and the parish councils were as yet unborn. The School Board was the first public body in London to which women were elected; four or five years later came their election to boards of guardians; more recently still their short tenure of seats on the London County Council, and 1894 their election on vestries and parish councils.

It will be noted that women began with the biggest and hardest thing—the School Board. To become a candidate in the early days, before the constituencies were subdivided as they are now, was a costly and laborious undertaking. So much ground had to be covered, so many meetings held, such a variety of interests consulted. And once on the Board, it required a mind of considerable grasp to grapple with the complicated business of such a

large body. The immense amount of individual work which conscientious members found laid upon them—the visiting of the schools, attending meetings of parents to inquire into cases of non-attendance, and other duties outside the walls of the board-room —showed what a large scope there was for women of leisure and capacity. The first women elected to the School Board were Miss Garrett, afterwards Mrs. Garrett-Anderson, M.D., and Miss Emily Davies. Subsequently came Mrs. Westlake, Mrs. Fenwick-Miller, Mrs. Herbert Cowell, Miss Chessar, Miss Helen Taylor, and Mrs. Surr, who all sat in the seventies.

There was never any organized movement for procuring the election of women to the School Board as there was later for promoting their return as Poor-law Guardians, and the number of women seeking election has latterly declined. This is due partly to the extreme unpopularity of the London School Board, and also to the great expense of a School Board candidature, to the changed character of the Board, which has become a less educational and a more purely business assembly, and to the opening out of fresh fields of work.

With regard to the election of women as Poor-law Guardians, time has shown both the increasing need and the increasing willingness of

women to act in this capacity since Miss Martha Merrington led the way twenty years ago. But the numbers who were returned at the election of 1894 so far surpassed any previous record that it marks an era in the movement. Up to that year there had never been more than 170 to 180 women guardians throughout the country. Now there are nearly 900, 342 out of the 648 unions having women on their boards. London alone has between eighty and ninety.

The changes which took place in the forms of local government, generally, in 1894, through the passing of the Parish Councils Act, stirred up candidates of both sexes in all parts, and roused electors from their normal apathy. It is difficult to see why the office of guardian suddenly became so much more popular, for wherever the duties are altered they are made more burdensome, as in certain country districts, where a guardian is obliged also to become a parish councillor. A similar interest was aroused in the vestry elections, and the contest was keener than it has ever been known to be, although in many districts the vestries have very little power, the main business being carried on by the district boards, to which the vestries send representatives. For the first time women were elected to the vestries, though only in a few

places. This new departure in local government is significant of future changes.

Although 1894 must be regarded as a phenomenal year in relation to the election of women guardians, and probably many of those elected for the first time will not show the same zeal in coming forward again, it is becoming more and more of an accepted principle that boards of guardians should be mixed bodies. Many of the questions which come before guardians of the poor are thoroughly "women's questions," in the popular sense of that phrase, meaning questions that relate to food, clothing, household economy, and the wants of children. The more enlightened of the male guardians gratefully recognize the help that women can give in solving problems of domestic management, and in dealing with the women and infants who form so large a part of every pauper establishment. The participation by women in Poor-law administration is a very notable as well as a beneficial change. England is unique in her Poor-law system, and unique in having women to assist in its working. The Ladies' Visiting Committees appointed, with the consent of the Local Government Board, by the guardians also do excellent work.

The voluntary work which women have done on the School Board, as Poor-law guardians, as

visitors to workhouses, and in other ways, has done something to pave the way for the appointment of women to paid offices. The most important of these appointments was that of Inspector of Workhouse Schools. The late Mrs. Nassau Senior was chosen for this office, in 1873, by Mr. James Stansfeld, who was then President of the Local Government Board. The Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants was subsequently founded by Mrs. Senior, who was anxious to smooth the career of the girls brought up in workhouse schools. Mrs. Senior has had no successor in her own special work, but the system of boarding-out pauper children has created the need for an inspectorship of a different kind, and in 1885 Miss Mason was appointed as inspector of all the children boarded-out by the unions throughout the country, an arduous post which she still occupies.

The closing decade of this century has seen women filling public posts which before had been exclusively held by men. There have been four factory inspectors appointed between 1892 and 1893, and two between 1893 and 1894. The Vestry of St. Mary Abbots, Kensington, has appointed three sanitary inspectors under the Factory Act of 1891 to inspect workshops where

women and girls are employed. The office of assistant-overseer at Chepstow has been filled by a woman. The ward of Walbrook, in the City of London, had a woman as rate-collector for several years, and there has been one also at Barford, Warwickshire. In most parts of London there are police-matrons who attend to the women brought to the police-stations.

Women have been appointed on the Labour Commission, on the Poor-law Schools Commission, and on the Royal Commission on Secondary Education. On the Labour Commission the women were styled Assistant Commissioners, though their duties seem to have been as onerous as those of the male Commissioners, but on the Secondary Education Commission they took equal rank. Women also sat on the Scotch Departmental Committee, on Habitual Offenders, and the Poor-law Schools Commission which sat between 1893 and 1894.

This co-operation of women with men in public life is the more remarkable because in other social matters we cling to tradition. We have not got mixed schools as in America, and that freedom of intercourse between the sexes which prevails in the States is looked upon here with suspicion and dislike. It is exceedingly difficult in an old and aristocratic country to break through social

customs. If the ground had not been laid by other movements, women would not now be able to take that active part in public work which is so striking a characteristic of the present day.

In former times certain high offices which have long since passed entirely over to men were occasionally held by women. The office of sheriff may be cited as an instance. When it was hereditary in certain families, whoever happened to be in the direct line held the office. For several centuries the office of Sheriff of Westmoreland was the birthright of the Clifford family. Isabella de Clifford, who lived in the reign of Edward I., held the office after she became a widow, and is said to have sat in the court of Appleby where the assizes were held. After the time of Isabella, who died about 1292, the office became the subject of litigation between two heiresses, sisters, who both claimed the right to appoint some one to the post. It was finally settled that the elder sister should "present" the candidate, and the younger "approve" the appointment.*

The celebrated Anne Dorset, Countess of Pembroke and Montgomery, was the last of her race to hold the office. She appointed one

* Sir G. Drukett, "Sheriffs of Westmoreland."

Thomas Gambettas as her Pro Vice Comes. It is curious that the Countess does not describe in her MS. Autobiography any occurrences during her tenure of the office, considering the keen interest which she took in county business. She mentions more than once the coming of the judges to Appleby to hold the assizes, and she seems to have entertained them in her Castle. The Countess left the shrievalty to the Tufton family.

Another celebrated lady who held the office of sheriff was Nicholaa de la Haye, who defended Lincoln Castle on behalf of King John, and was appointed by him Sheriff of Lincoln.

A similar case occurred in Wiltshire in the twelfth century. The Earl of Salisbury, who died in 1196, left his daughter Ela heiress of all his titles and possessions. She married William Longespée, a son of Fair Rosamund, who after his marriage succeeded to his wife's hereditary office of the Shrievalty of Wiltshire. After the death of her husband Ela lived alone in her Castle of Old Sarum, and filled the office of high sheriff for seven or eight years, when, weary of feudal dignity, she retired from the world and founded Lacock Abbey.

The office of Marshal of England was held by a woman in the reign of Richard II. Margaret, daughter and heiress of Thomas de Brotherton,

was created Duchess of Norfolk, and was called, either by right or courtesy, Lady Marshal. She certainly petitioned the Duke of Lancaster that she might exercise the office at the King's coronation, as her right, after the death of her father. It was granted, but she performed the duties by deputy, investing her son, Thomas Mowbray, with the Marshal's rod. At the same coronation Anne Dowager Countess of Pembroke was granted the office of the Napery, which she performed by deputy.

Another lady, Edeline, daughter of Ranulph de Broc, inherited the office of Marshal from her father in the reign of Henry II. She, in her turn, conferred it upon her husband, Stephen de Turnham. Two ladies, Ivan and Agnes, who were descendants of this family, and heiresses, held the Manor of Catteshill, in Godalming, by the service of Marshal, in the reign of Edward III.; and Nicholas Hering, husband of Agnes, claimed in her right the office of Usher of the King's Chamber at the coronation of Richard II., but it is doubtful whether he ever obtained the post. This same Manor of Catteshill was held by Edeline de Broc and her husband by the service of Usher formerly held by Edeline's father Ranulph.*

Among the duties appertaining to the office

* "Blount s Tenures."

of Marshal, duties similar to those of Usher, was that of providing women servants for the inferior household offices when the King was journeying. One Hamo de Gatten, in the reign of Henry III., for instance, held the Manor of Gateshill, in Surrey, "by serjeanty of being Marshall of the laundresses when the King should come into those parts."

Other offices, such as that of Champion and High Constable, were held by certain ladies, and conveyed by them to their husbands and sons, who performed the duties. Margaret, daughter of the Earl of Hereford, inheriting all her father's honours through the death of her brothers, became Constable to King Henry II. In the reign of Henry VIII. it was decreed—

"that this office might be annexed to lands and descend even to females who while they remain unmarried might appoint a deputy to do the service for them; but after marriage it was to be done by the husband of the eldest alone."

This would seem to imply that there had been some dispute as to whether the office could be held by a woman. It was also enacted that—

"the service was not extinct though part of the lands from which it was done fell into the hands of the King to whom it was due, but remained entire in the eldest daughter."

At the same time the King reserved to himself the privilege of refusing the service of any one to whom he objected. When the Duke of Buckingham, who had married the eldest daughter of the last Humphrey de Bohun, claimed the office of Constable to Edward III., it was refused, and the office fell into disuse and was never revived.

The office of Champion has also sometimes fallen to a woman through being hereditary. Whoever might be the owner of Scrivelsby Manor, in Lincolnshire, was the King's Champion. At the coronation of Richard II. a quarrel took place, similar to the quarrel over the Shrievalty of Westmoreland already mentioned. Again the quarrel was between two sisters, descendants of the Marmion family, who had always held the office. The younger sister, Lady Dymoke, who had inherited the Scrivelsby estates, claimed the title, and her husband officiated as her deputy. He died in 1381, and their son subsequently acted for his mother at two coronations, that of Henry IV. and Henry V., but Lady Dymoke would not give up her title or abdicate regularly in favour of her son. She was a woman of great spirit and energy, and, as the saying goes in her native county, she refused to take off her slippers before she went to bed.

Another high office, that of Great Chamberlain, has been held during the present reign conjointly by Lady Willoughby de Eresby and Lord Carrington.

It seems to have been a recognized principle in former times that hereditary offices descended without distinction of sex. There were no provisions for passing over female heirs. At the present day women do not gain honours of this kind by virtue of descent. They are debarred as women from holding high official positions.

There are some minor offices which have been held by women, such as that of sexton and parish clerk, though if, as has been stated, parish clerks were formerly required to take Holy Orders,* the duties must have been performed by deputy. There is, however, at least one case of a woman acting as sexton. This was Hester Hammerton, who was born at Kingston in 1711, and whose father was sexton for many years. She was his assistant, and one day while they were digging a grave in the Chapel of St. Mary, within the parish church, a large part of the building gave way. Hester's father was killed, and she herself was buried in the *débris* for seven hours, and was seriously injured. But she recovered sufficiently

* J. J. S. Wharton.

to undertake the work which she and her father had before performed jointly, being a very muscular, active woman. When she was not digging graves she acted as bell-ringer. She died in her native place in 1746.

From the manor rolls of Wimbledon it appears that women were formerly elected to the office of reeve and beadle. In the time of Edward IV. occurs the following entry:—

"All the tenants of the domain chose to the office of head-borough, in the place of Richard Hoke, Margaret Sigir for one hide of land containing four virgats lately exercised by John Twigg for two virgats called Elams. And the aforesaid Margaret took the oath for that office in this year and to the office of Beadle in the place of John Twig."

There are hardly any parochial offices now open to women. As the late Frederick Denison Maurice said with regard to the professions, it is not law, but custom that shuts women out. Sentiment is responsible, too, for a great deal, and has created serious difficulties in the way of women engaging in public work. The untried thing, like the absent person, is always wrong.

"Je ne puis pourtant pas m'habituer à l'idée de voir les femmes faire concurrence aux hommes dans les emplois de la vie publique," wrote Madame de Lacoste in 1869.

"Et sans croire absolument suivant l'adage, qu'une femme ne peut être que courtisane ou menagère, je n'admets pas qu'elle s'affranchisse de ses devoirs domestiques pour devenir, que que soit d'ailleurs son intelligence, avocat ou médecin."

The same feeling prevailed, and still prevails, to some extent here, though people have grown accustomed to see men and women working side by side in public life. Sometimes the objection put forth is to the association of the sexes, sometimes to the mere fact of women performing what has hitherto been done by men. Fear is often expressed lest women should undertake work for which they are unfit, and society be injured thereby. The risk of getting unsuitable women into public posts, paid or voluntary, is no greater than the risk of getting unsuitable men, and it is as easy to displace one as the other. If the simple attitude is adopted of judging a person according to merit and capacity, instead of sex, women will not be chosen because they are women, or men because they are men, but because as individuals they best fulfil the requirements of the office.

On the general question of the advantage to be gained by women entering public life there will probably always be controversy, although in the departments already tried the result has been

distinctly favourable to the mingling of the sexes. Women have not shown those inherent defects of nature pointed out by Ouida, with her usual stinging frankness :—

"Women in public would exaggerate the failings of men, and would not have even their few excellencies. Their legislation would be, as that of men is too often, the offspring of panic or prejudice, and she would not put on the drag of common-sense as man frequently does in public assemblies. There would be little to hope from her humanity, nothing from her liberality; for when she is frightened she is more ferocious than he, and when she has power, more merciless."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CLAIM FOR POLITICAL EQUALITY.

Origin of the claim—Mary Wollstonecraft—The Anti-Slavery Convention—John Stuart Mill and the first Woman's Suffrage Petition—*The Times* on Woman's Suffrage—The question in Parliament—The Scotch workers—Women electors in olden times—Women voters of this century—Miss Lydia Becker's work—The Suffrage Societies—Irish workers—Incidents of the work in Scotland—Condorcet and Mr. Lecky on Woman's Suffrage.

WHEN several movements are working simultaneously with great activity, as at the present day, it will usually be found that there is one among the movements which serves as a lever to the others. It is often asserted that religion, education, and philanthropy have nothing to do with politics, and the workers in those departments of life would be loth to admit that they owe any portion of their success to the workers in the political arena. But the claim for political equality which, for the last thirty years, has been making itself felt, is really the basis of all efforts to improve the position of

women, for it is a claim that women should be treated as responsible, independent beings, with duties to society and the State—duties which should carry the same recognition and privileges as in the case of men. A woman who asks to be allowed to compete for University examinations, or to study medicine, or to take her place in the Art Schools, or to enter the Civil Service, is making a request similar in nature, though not in form, to that of the woman householder who asks to be allowed a share in the choice of the candidate who is to represent her interests in Parliament. The demand in all cases is the same, viz. that other things being equal, sex shall not be a disqualification, whether the demand is one for education, employment, or political privilege.

The Woman's Suffrage Movement must be regarded as the keystone to the conglomerate mass of efforts for the enlargement of women's lives, and in regard to the relation of women to politics it is the most considerable feature of the nineteenth century.

Now, although it seems such a thoroughly latter-day question, it had its beginnings in the last century, when Mary Wollstonecraft published her book, "Vindication of the Rights of Women," and Condorcet his treatise, "Sur l'Admission des Femmes

au Droits de Cité." To trace the origin of a social movement is not unlike seeking the source of a river. The stream, as we follow it upwards, grows smaller and smaller, till we come to two or three rills, which, converging, form a rivulet. The stream of thought tendency is somewhat similar: its origin is to be found in different channels which, when they at length unite, form one body of ever-increasing volume.

After the time of Mary Wollstonecraft's book, which was published in 1792, there is little to record for some years. The next noticeable work on the subject was entitled, "An Appeal of one Half the Human Race, Women, against the Pretensions of the other Half, Men;" it was by William Thompson, who declared that he was inspired to his task by Mrs. Wheeler, the mother of Lady Bulwer-Lytton. This was a counterblast to an article by James Mill in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* on "Government," in which he controverted the claims of women to representation by declaring that their interests were all involved in the interests of their fathers or husbands.

In 1840 was held the great Anti-Slavery Convention in London. From America came eight women delegates, but they were formally excluded on account of their sex. This decision fired the

delegates to action. On their return to America they began to take steps to secure equal rights for women. Some ten years later there followed a series of meetings, the news of which so stirred up women in England that in 1851 a petition, claiming the elective franchise, was presented to the House of Lords by the Earl of Carlisle. Thus the first petition that ever came before Parliament was sent to the Upper Chamber. The Commons were not approached until some fifteen years later. These American gatherings formed the theme of Mrs. John Stuart Mill's remarkable article in *The Westminster Review* for July, 1851, on "The Enfranchisement of Women," which was afterwards reprinted in J. S. Mill's "Dissertations and Discussions."

About this time was begun the movement for the Higher Education of Women, Queens' College, which had been opened in 1848, being incorporated in 1853. The hostility which this excited among the unthinking majority, who declared women would be unsexed by being allowed greater educational privileges, was, in later years, directed against the founders of Woman's Suffrage, who were regarded as a set of dangerous agitators.

It was in the year 1853 that we find recorded the first notable public utterance by a member of Parliament on the subject of Woman's Suffrage.

The late Mr. W. J. Fox, M.P., on the presentation to him by the ladies of Oldham of a signet ring, bearing the inscription, "Education, the birthright of all," prophesied that the time would come when a woman would be something more than an adjective to man in political matters, that she would herself become a substantive. If she were adequate to the sovereignty, to making peers and bishops, surely she was adequate to sending her representative to the Lower House. He also used the argument—which in the days of the East India Company was so cogent a one—that every woman who held East India Company's stock elected the directors, who were virtually the governors of the Indian Empire.

The late Madame Bodichon (Barbara Leigh Smith), who died in 1891, will always be remembered as chief among the earlier promoters of the movement. Her intellectual gifts, her social status, her wealth and beauty gave her a unique position, and there was no more effective champion of the cause, of which indeed she might be called the inspiring genius. Being a daughter and a grand-daughter of successive members for Norwich, she had some political influence, and was able to bring the subject of the legal position of women before Lord Brougham and Mr. Hastings, who were actively engaged in promoting the Amendment of

the Law. The National Association for the Promotion of Social Science had been founded in 1857, and more than once at the annual congresses the subject of the enfranchisement of women was discussed, Madame Bodichon being the first to read a paper on the subject. Her little book on the laws relating to women was the forerunner of the Married Women's Property agitation.

In 1865 Mr. J. S. Mill was returned to Parliament. Miss Jessie Boucherett, the founder of *The Englishwoman's Review* (now under the editorship of Miss Helen Blackburn), asked Mr. Mill if he would present a petition to the House from women in favour of their political enfranchisement. He replied that if they could get one hundred signatures he would; he should not like to present one with fewer. Thereupon Miss Boucherett, Miss Emily Davies, and Madame Bodichon met together and drew up a petition, praying the House to consider the expediency of providing for the representation of all householders, without distinction of sex, who possess the requisite property or rental qualification. This was signed by 1499 women, among whom were Mrs. Alford, wife of the Dean of Canterbury, Miss Frances Buss, founder of the North London Collegiate School, Mrs. Josephine Butler, Miss Frances Power Cobbe, Mrs. R. Cobden, Miss

Matilda Beetham Edwards, Mrs. Fawcett (Salisbury), Lady Goldsmid, Dr. Elizabeth Garrett, Mrs. Miall, Mrs. Somerville, Miss Anna Swanwick, Mrs. Tanner, Miss Helen Taylor, and Madame Venturi.

In May, 1866, Mr. Mill presented the petition. A few days before, on April 27, Mr. Disraeli had spoken in the House in favour of Woman's Suffrage. This year, 1866, was still further to be a memorable one in the annals of the movement. On October 6, Madame Bodichon read a paper before the Social Science Congress on "Reasons for the Enfranchisement of Women." One of the listeners to this address was Lydia Ernestine Becker, then in the prime of her intellectual vigour. It was pre-eminently a case of the opportunity and the woman. That 6th of October became the turning-point in her life; it determined her to devote her energies to the new cause, and the movement for the first twenty years of its course became stamped with the impress of her strong personality. On January 11, 1867, she formed the Manchester Committee. The London organization was formed towards the close of the year.

In *The Westminster Review* for January, 1867, there appeared a well-reasoned article on "The Claim of Englishwomen to the Suffrage Constitutionally Considered." It was from the pen of Miss

Helen Taylor, step-daughter of John Stuart Mill, and well known in the seventies as a member of the London School Board. Over and over again have the arguments which she so dexterously unfolded been adduced by speakers on the subject; but, what specially caught public attention was the telling way in which she emphasized the fact that women were put into the same category as minors, idiots, lunatics, and criminals.

"These and these only," she said, "are classed politically along with women. But none of these are so classed in anything but in politics."

The moment for raising the question was opportune. The English public are reported to be only able to think of one subject at a time, and just then Electoral Reform discussions filled the air. *The Times* wrote on March 6 of that year,—

"The approaching controversy on Reform promises to be enlivened by an episode of a singularly interesting character. Mr. Mill will appear as the representative—not of constituencies that are or that would be—not the two or three hundred thousand that have been flattered with a glimpse of the suffrage, but of half the human race—the better half—entire womankind, or to speak more particularly, every adult woman in this country."

About the same time appeared Miss Becker's article in *The Contemporary Review* containing the

phrase, often quoted, though without acknowledgment:

"It may be denied that women have anything to do with politics; it cannot be denied that politics have a great deal to do with women."

Then came the memorable May 19, 1867, the day of days in the Woman's Suffrage calendar, when Mr. John Stuart Mill moved, as an amendment to the Representation of the People Bill, to omit the word "man" and insert the word "person" in its place. Including the tellers and the pairs on each side, the numbers were 83 for Mr. Mill's amendment and 202 against it. In the majority there were 80 Liberals and 122 Conservatives; in the minority 66 Liberals and 15 Conservatives—a very different division of opinion to that of later debates, and especially to that of the present time when the question has ceased to be a party one. Those among Mr. Mill's supporters best known to the present generation were the late Mr. Fawcett, the late Mr. Duncan M'Laren, the Right Hon. Sir James Stansfeld, Sir E. W. Watkin, Judge Hughes, and Mr. Labouchere. The late Mr. Bernal Osborne, Mr. Gladstone, and Sir Charles Russell were among the opponents. A sentence from Mr. Mill's great speech gives the exact nature of the women's position—

"There is no other example of an exclusion which is absolute. If the law denied a vote to all but the possessors of £5000 a-year, the poorest man in the nation might—and now and then would—acquire the suffrage; but neither birth nor fortune, nor merit nor exertion, nor intellect nor even that great disposer of human affairs—accident, can ever enable any woman to have her voice counted in those national affairs which touch her and hers as nearly as any other person in the nation."

In the course of 1867 a committee had been formed in Edinburgh. On November 6 of that year the committees of London, Edinburgh, and Manchester united to form the National Society, which both Mr. Mill and his step-daughter joined. On the committee of this National Society were Miss Frances Power Cobbe, Mrs. Fawcett, Miss Hampson, Miss Hare, Miss Lloyd, Mrs. Lucas, Mrs. Stansfeld, and Mrs. P. A. Taylor, who was hon. secretary and treasurer, assisted by Miss C. A. Biggs.

From Scotland came thirty petitions, with 10,467 signatures; from Ireland ten petitions, two of which were signed by nearly 3000 persons of all classes, of different creeds, and of different political opinions. The West of England was also early in the field, the meeting at which the 'Bristol and West of England Society was formed being held at the house of Mr. Recorder Davenport Hill at Clifton,

Professor F. W. Newman, brother of the Cardinal, becoming hon. secretary. The session of 1868 was pre-eminently a petitioning one. Between February and July 75 petitions, containing 49,780 signatures, were presented.

The year 1868 was marked by three events—the publication of John Stuart Mill's book, "The Subjection of Women," the application of about ten thousand women householders in many parts of England to be placed on the Parliamentary Register, and the decision of the Court of Common Pleas against this claim.

The wisdom of pressing matters on to this adverse decision has been very much questioned, criticism being easy from the vantage ground of a quarter of a century of fuller knowledge. The Reform Act of 1832 was the first statutory exclusion of women from the Parliamentary franchise. Mary Countess of Norfolk, Alienor Countess of Ormond, Anne Despenser, Philippa Countess of March, Johanna Fitzwater Augusta Countess of Pembroke, Mary de St. Paul, Mary de Roos, Matilda Countess of Oxford, and Catherine Countess of Athol were summoned to attend Parliament by proxy. Under the Lancastrian kings certain ladies returned the knights for Yorkshire. Prynne tells us of two of them, viz. Lucy Countess of Cane and Margaret

widow of Henry Vavasour. Doughty Dame Dorothy Packington, of Elizabethan days, was the sole elector of Aylesbury. In 1572 she voted for—or, rather, appointed—two representatives, whose expenses she paid. This is how Dame Dorothy made her return:—

"Know ye me the said Dame Dorothy Packington to have chosen, named and appointed my trusty and well beloved Thomas Lichfield and John Burden, Esquires, to be my burgesses of my said town of Aylesbury. And whatsoever the said Thomas and John, burgesses shall do in the service of the Queen's Highness in that present Parliament to be holden at Westminster, the eighth day of May next ensuing the date thereof, I, the same Dame Dorothy Packington do ratify and approve to be my own act as fully or as wholly as if I were or might be present there."

In the reign of James I. the question of a woman's right to vote was raised, but a judicial decree ruled that to an unmarried woman or widow a freehold carried with it the right of voting. In a black-letter book published in London in 1632 we read—

"The reason why women have no control in Parliament, why they make no laws, consent to none, abrogate none, is their original sin."

After being practically, though not technically, disfranchised by the Commonwealth when Sir Edward Coke pronounced his dictum, women

resumed the vote after the Restoration, but returning officers fell into the custom of refusing their names. Then came the Reform Act of 1832, which legalized this hitherto illegal custom. Inserted in this Act were the words "male person," which deprived women of their constitutional right as owners of property, despite Lord Romilly's Act providing that "words importing the masculine gender shall be deemed and taken to include females, unless the contrary be expressly provided."

For more than thirty years after the Reform Act no attempt was made by women to exercise the franchise, but at the election of 1867 a Mrs. Maxwell, a shopkeeper of Manchester, discovered that her name was on the Parliamentary register. She at once resolved to exercise her unlooked-for privilege in favour of Mr. Jacob Bright. Accompanied by two ladies, one of whom was Miss Becker, Mrs. Maxwell went to Mr. Bright's committee-rooms, whence several gentlemen escorted them to the polling-place. As soon as her vote was duly recorded, three hearty cheers were given her by all in the room, whether Mr. Bright's supporters or not. In returning thanks the successful candidate referred to "the remarkable circumstance."

"This woman," he said, "is a hard-working, honest

person, who pays her rates as you do—(hear)—who contributes to the burdens of the State as you do—(hear, hear)—and, therefore, if any woman should possess a vote, it is precisely such a one as she—(hear, hear, and cheers)."

In September, 1868, 5,750 women in Manchester claimed to be on the register, and similar claims were made by women householders in forty-nine other constituencies. Some 10,000 in all parts of the country asserted the right. Before the Registration Courts were opened the overseers had put women on the list of Parliamentary voters in four London parishes, in the county of Middlesex, and in eleven or twelve other places. Among those who were thus able to claim the vote were Lady Georgiana Cecily Fane and Mrs. Lucas, sister of John Bright. But the claimants were in nearly all cases rejected, and in Leeds a Quaker lady was fined ten shillings for making "a frivolous claim."

Various appeals having been made against the judgment of the revising barristers, these cases were brought before the Court of Common Pleas on November 8, the judges being Lord Chief Justice Bovill and Justices Willes, Byles, and Keating. The first case was that of the 5,346 women ratepayers at Manchester whose claims had been disallowed. The Chief Justice confirmed the decision of the revising barrister, ruling that

long usage was against the women's claims. All the other cases were similarly decided. In the High Court of Scotland, a few days before, Lords Ardmillan, Manor, and Benholme had given a similar decision.

Since 1868 women have on several occasions asserted their right to vote. During the general election of 1892, for instance, there were some women claimants. Jeannot Edwards went to the poll at Llangynog, and as her name was on the register, the returning officer allowed her vote. At Whitehill, in the mid-division of Gloucestershire, Alma Pearce was on the register; the presiding officer said he could not be made the judge of her sex, and she voted for Mr. Brynmor Jones. At the Clitheroe election the presiding officer refused the vote of Micah Riley on seeing that Micah was a woman.

A Bill to amend the Municipal Corporation Reform Act of 1835 was before the House of Commons in 1869, and Mr. Jacob Bright's amendment, that words importing the masculine gender should be held to include the feminine for all purposes of electing representatives to town councils, was passed without discussion, thus restoring the right to vote taken away in 1832.

The year 1870 was a very notable one in the progress of the movement. On March 1 was

published the first number of *The Woman's Suffrage Journal.* It was edited by Miss Becker, and continued to appear every month until her death in July, 1890.

Miss Becker has so often been caricatured as the typical "Woman's Righter"—whatever that may be—that those who only knew her by hearsay may be a little surprised to learn that she was an adept at a pudding, an excellent needlewoman, and danced the hop-waltz beautifully. She was the eldest daughter, and a very domestic daughter too, of a family of fifteen. "Oh, I have been cutting-out garments for our family before taking up my pen," was her answer to a friend who was surprised to see a sewing-machine in her room. Far from being the Valkyria of the fray, she once said to Miss Frances Power Cobbe that words could not tell how she longed for the end of the fight, and to be released from perpetual contention for a bare right, that she might devote herself to some work of a happier kind. She had a great love of flowers, and botany was her favourite study. Domestic happiness she looked upon as the *summum bonum* of life, and to a married lady, who was strongly urging the claims of wives to the franchise, she replied, "My dear friend, a really good husband is worth all the votes in the world." She was the first

woman who ever sat on a school board, and when the Manchester canvassers brought in their returns, both sides reported, "The working men always say they must keep some of their votes for Lydia." In July, 1890, Miss Becker died with almost tragic suddenness. The late Mr. Fawcett used to say of her that she was the woman with the man's mind.

The work of promoting Woman's Suffrage has been steadily carried on since 1870. Bills, backed now by Liberals and now by Conservatives, have been brought forward from time to time in Parliament, where advocates are found among all political parties. There have been occasions when the measure all but succeeded, as in 1870, when the second reading was passed by a majority of thirty-three, but was thrown out in Committee; and in 1886, when the Bill was carried without a division, but before it could reach the Committee stage Parliament was dissolved.

The Woman's Suffrage movement, like other social movements, has done much to develop not only organizing and general business capacity among women, but the gift of oratory. The roll of really good public speakers is large and increasing.

There are now several societies for the advancement of the question. The Central Committee

of the National Society for Woman's Suffrage, which owes so much to the services, literary and otherwise, of Miss Helen Blackburn, continues the policy of the earliest workers, who only claimed the vote for duly qualified women householders—a basis which commends itself to many who are opposed to women taking an active part in politics.

Prominent in this society is Mrs. Fawcett, whose name has become a household word, and whose speeches, temperate and well reasoned, have probably done more than those of any other speaker of the present day to bring the subject home to the uninitiated, and to win over the half-convinced. The Central National Society is identified more specially with Liberal politics, working largely with the Women's Liberal Federation, while the Women's Franchise League, of which Mrs. Jacob Bright is the mainstay, is established to support the claims of wives who own separate property to electoral recognition. In the provinces the Manchester and Bristol Societies are the most prominent organizations.

Ireland has kept pace with, if not outrun, "the predominant partner." Mrs. Haslam, in Dublin, and Miss Tod, in Belfast, who have for years spent their energies in the cause, are the present representative workers, and to them is due the

credit of the progress made in the sister isle. Miss Tod is always heartily welcomed on this side of St. George's Channel, and her earnest eloquence has roused many an English audience to enthusiasm.

The movement started with Miss Anne Isabella Robertson, who in the sixties began to take an active interest in the question. It was not the prick of a personal wrong, or discontent with her own happy circumstances, that stirred Miss Robertson to action, but a strong and growing sense of the inequality of woman's position, which she made the theme of story after story contributed to Irish magazines. After this she worked at getting up petitions and at forming the Irish Society for Women's Suffrage.

The first petition circulated in Dublin received more than two thousand signatures, and from one of the country districts the names of the Roman Catholic priest and the Protestant clergyman appeared in brotherly unity on the same sheet. Getting into touch with workers in England and Scotland, Miss Robertson's services were soon laid claim to by both countries, lady orators being rare in those days. She was one of the chief speakers at the first public meeting ever held on Women's Suffrage in the United Kingdom. This was in

Manchester, in April, 1868. In the autumn Miss Robertson crossed the Channel a third time, at the request of Miss Becker, to support her at the British Association meeting at Norwich. Miss Robertson's courage inspired a daughter of Sir Rowland Hill to a similar step.

The Scottish workers had many difficulties to contend with in early days, and some amusing experiences. Miss Jane Taylour, a pioneer of the Women's Suffrage Movement, relates how she went to Perth on one occasion to give an address, and found a crowded audience awaiting her, but no chairman. The provost, who was to have presided, had been unexpectedly summoned to London. In the committee-room were the baillies and councillors, elderly men all of them, who had come as in duty bound to support the provost, but not one of these grave senators would consent to take his place. The audience were giving signs of impatience, but the baillies waited in stolid indifference. Miss Taylour grew very uncomfortable, being herself new to public life. She looked round upon the aged faces in the committee-room, and, selecting the baillie who had the most benevolent countenance, she quietly placed her arm within his and proceeded to the hall. The worthy baillie, before he had grasped the situation, found

himself conducted into the chair, where he performed his functions in due form, explaining to the audience, however, that he was not there of his own accord, that he had been kidnapped. This gentleman afterwards became a member of the Women's Suffrage Committee.

On another occasion those responsible for organizing a meeting at Irvine had failed, and when Miss Taylour and Miss Mary Burton, of Edinburgh, arrived they found that no preparations had been made. Miss Burton went to the Town Hall, which was fortunately disengaged, then hunted out the bellman, and accompanied him herself on a tour round the town. The result was a packed hall.

At Kilbarchan, a large weaving village in Renfrewshire, the meeting was proclaimed with the sound of cymbals, played by a member of the local band, who paraded the streets with the town crier. The weavers, going to their doors and hearing the novel announcement of a Women's Suffrage meeting, exclaimed with one voice, "We'll gang." And they thronged to the parish schoolroom in such numbers that the speakers were requested to re-deliver a portion of their addresses to a second audience who had been unable to gain admission. Miss Lauder, daughter of the

late Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, was on the platform, and, after she had spoken of her father's labours in the cause of reform, the people pressed round her to grasp her hand.

At Kirkwall, in the Orkney Isles, the minister of the place preached a sermon the day before the meeting against what he called such unwomanly and unseemly proceedings, and added a tirade against women wearing short hair, which was a style adopted by the two lady speakers. The result was that the hall was overflowing.

During a period of five years' public work, only once was there any hostile demonstration, and this was at a town in Fifeshire, where, after the meeting, the ladies had to be hurried into the carriage under police escort to protect them from the mob, who were howling and flourishing sticks.

In the Pentland Frith, a very dangerous part of the Scottish coast, the ladies, who had engaged to hold a meeting in Thurso, were overtaken by a severe storm while crossing in the mail packet from Stromness, and the engines breaking down, the vessel was very nearly dashed upon the rocks. A sudden change of wind averted a catastrophe.

The Scottish workers who, in the seventies, travelled about among the Orkney and Shetland Isles and into the Western Highlands, had many a

rough experience; but, as a result of their labours, and of the zeal and organizing ability of Mrs. Duncan M'Laren, of Edinburgh, whose work in a different line was equally necessary, sixty committees were formed, and at the time when Scotland returned only sixty members to Parliament, more than half were pledged to support the Women's Franchise Bill, and the remainder were neutral.

Although the Parliamentary chances of the measure are rendered doubly uncertain by the encroachments upon the time of private members by the Government, the public sentiment in favour of the measure is strengthening. This is partly due to the fact that the advance which women are making in other directions—their entrance into municipal, Poor-law, and educational work, and their admission to both the school board and municipal franchises—has made the claim to vote for a member of Parliament appear far less startling—

"Is there a stronger proof of the power of habit, even over enlightened men," wrote the French philosopher Condorcet, "than the spectacle of equality of rights being invoked in favour of three or four hundred men that an absurd prejudice had deprived them of, and being forgotten in respect of twelve millions of women?"

There is an inconsistency in refusing the vote to a woman who is engaged in the responsible work of administering the Poor-law, and carrying out the provisions of the Education Act. Women are being daily educated in the duties of civic life, and more and more qualified for the duties of citizenship. They are now undergoing that mental change which Mr. Lecky prophesied when he wrote—

"If the Suffrage should ever be granted to women it would probably, after two or three generations, effect a complete revolution in their habits of thought which, by acting upon the first period of education, would influence the whole course of opinion."

It has seemed fitting to bring this review of the position of women in England to a close with a sketch of the Suffrage movement, because nothing else emphasizes so clearly the great change that has taken place with regard to women. It marks an era in the social history of England. In previous periods all efforts, whether intellectual or moral, all activity, civic or political, on the part of women, was individual and owed nothing to combination or to public sentiment. The scholars, the philanthropists, the politicians stood out in isolated groups apart from the main current of life. There was no

general stream of tendency ; society was broken up into well-defined circles. In the last half-century a common principle of action among workers of all grades has caused those circles to amalgamate for the pursuit of certain ends.

Looking back to the Middle Ages, we see women as the home-keepers, occupied with domestic affairs, knowing nothing of the outside world, and unconcerned with matters that did not affect their family interests. As society was gradually reconstructed after the fall of Feudalism, a change crept into the lives of women of the upper classes, who were to some extent forced out of the old grooves. In the times of religious and political upheaval which followed, women, high and low, were swept into the current of national life, and played their part as history makers.

The mere passage of years did not invariably improve their position. Intellectual advance in one period was sometimes followed by retrogression in the next, and the inevitable social changes that tended ultimately to the general good were not always for the immediate benefit of women. In the eighteenth century, with its increase of material comfort and its wider opportunities, the position of women became more complex. In some directions there were great strides, in others a tendency to

moral inertia and intellectual stolidity. The influence of public sentiment was not favourable to the widening of women's lives. Advance was spasmodic.

At the present day there is a larger concourse of elements affecting the position of women than has ever been witnessed before. And whenever a change takes place in one section of society it quickly affects other sections. Movements are no longer confined to the class in which they originate. None of the social changes that have affected the position of men during the last half century have been so wide and far-reaching as those which have affected the position of women.

In giving a sketch of a large subject it is impossible to discuss every point of view. The legal aspect of the case, for instance, has not been dealt with, as it would involve the introduction of technical matter. Only slight reference has been made to the position of women in Scotland, where social and domestic life differed considerably from England up to this century, and where the modern women's movements are not in the same stage of progress.

The selection of the various phases of life may perhaps be considered arbitrary, but they are presented rather with a view of affording suggestions than of covering the whole field of inquiry.

INDEX.

ART.—Vol. I. Period II. chapter x.; Vol. II. Period III. chapter vi.

EDUCATION.—Vol. I. Period I. chapter ii.; Period II. chapter iii.; Vol. II. Period III. chapter iv.; Period IV. chapter iv.

LIFE (DOMESTIC AND SOCIAL).—Vol. I. Period I. chapters i., iii.; Period II. chapters i., iv., v.; Period III. chapters i., ii.; Vol. II. Period IV. chapters i., ii., x.

LITERATURE.—Vol. II. Period IV. chapter v.

MEDICINE.—Vol. II. Period IV. chapter xv.

NURSING.—Vol. II. Period IV. chapter xiv.

PHILANTHROPY.—Vol. I. Period I. chapter vii.; Vol. II. Period III. chapter v.; Period IV. chapter xi.

POLITICS.—Vol. I. Period II. chapters vi., vii.; Vol. II. Period III. chapter iii.; Period IV. chapters xvi., xviii.

PUBLIC WORK.—Vol. II. Period IV. chapter xvii.

RELIGION.—Vol. I. Period I. chapters v., vi.; Period II. chapter viii.; Vol. II. Period III. chapter vi.; Period IV. chapters xii., xiii.

TRADE.—Vol. I. Period I. chapter iv.; Vol. II. Period IV. chapters vii., viii., ix.

TRAVELLING.—Vol. II. Period IV. chapter iii.

WITCHCRAFT.—Vol. I. Period II. chapter ix.

A

Abbess, i. 63-69, 71

——, Saxon, i. 77

Aberdare, Lord, ii. 289

Aberdeen, Countess of, ii. 295

Academicians, ii. 167

Acton, Miss Eliza, i. 219

Actresses, i. 281

Adair, Mrs., ii. 38

Adderley, Mr., ii. 66

Afghanistan, ii. 131

Alcfrid, King, i. 65

Alderney, Miss, ii. 252

Aldhelm, i. 18

Aldrich-Blake, Miss, ii. 290

Alford, Mrs., ii. 328

Allingham, Mrs., ii. 166

All Saints' Sisterhood, ii. 239

Almack's Club, i. 345

Almsgiving, i. 100-109

Amelia, Princess, ii. 18

Anæsthetics, ii. 281

Ancaster, Duchess of, ii. 32

Anchoress, i. 73, 74

Anderson, Miss, ii. 287

Anderson, Mrs. Lucy, ii. 173
Anglican Sisters, ii. 240
Anne, daughter of Duke of Norfolk, i. 158
——, Queen, i. 277, 278; ii. 19-21, 25-27
——, wife of James I., i. 282
Anstruther, Miss, ii. 305
Anti-Slavery Convention, ii. 325
Apothecaries, Society of, ii. 283
Appletree, Mr., i. 228
Apprenticeship, i. 54
Ardmillan, Lord, ii. 337
Argyll, Duke of, i. 338
Art, ii. 162-175
Artists, i. 289
Arts, the, i. 275-304
Arundel, Lady Blanche, i. 212
——, Lord, i. 212
Ascham, Roger, i. 22, 128, 133
Askew, Anne, i. 241, 242
Aspley, Lucy, i. 149. *See* Hutchinson, Mrs.
——, Sir Allen, i. 207
Assistant-overseer, ii. 312
Associates (Royal Academy), ii. 167
Astell, Mrs. Mary, i. 252, 256-258
Astronomical Society, ii. 139
Athelstan, ii. 8
Athol, Catherine, Countess of, ii. 333
Atkins, Dr. Louisa, ii. 290
Atkinson, Miss Mary, ii. 169
Atterbury, Bishop, i. 257
Audry St., i. 64
Augustine, ii. 6

B

Bacon, Francis, i. 134
——, Sir Nicholas, i. 20, 134
Baker, John, i. 293
——, Lady, ii. 122-126
——, Miss, ii. 290
——, Sir Samuel, ii. 123-126
Balcarres, Earl of, i. 227
Balfour, Lady Frances, ii. 295, 305
Bamfield, Colonel, i. 225, 226
Bank of England, ii. 181
Bankes, Lady Mary, i. 214
Barking, Abbess of, i. 65
Barry, Elizabeth, i. 289
Bas-Bleu, ii. 40-58
Bassi, Madame Laura, ii. 283
Bathurst, Lord, ii. 30
Battenberg, Princess Henry, i. 107
Beale, Mary, i. 290
Beardman, Mrs., ii. 172
Beauchamp, Lady, ii. 35
Beaufort, Duke of, ii. 28
——, Margaret, i. 23-25
Becker, Miss Lydia E., ii. 329, 330, 338, 339
Beetham Edwards, Miss, ii. 329
Behn Aphra, Mrs., i. 284
Benholme, Lord, ii. 337
Benson, Miss, ii. 290
Berkeley, Family of, i. 80
——, Lady Joan, i. 11, 14
——, Lady Katherine, i. 169, 170
——, Lord Thomas, i. 14
Bertha, Queen, ii. 6
Bess of Hardwick, i. 102, 162, 163
Betterton, Mrs., i. 281, 289
Biblesworth, Walter de, i. 22
Biggs, Miss C. A., ii. 332
Bird, Miss, ii. 122, 126-128
Blackburn, Miss Helen, ii. 328, 340
Blackfriars Theatre, i. 282
Blackie, Professor, ii. 286
Blackwell, Dr. Elizabeth, ii. 284
Blagdon, ii. 60, 63
Blangdon, Barbara, i. 247
Blessington, Lady, i. 136; ii. 107
Blow, i. 302
Boadicea, ii. 5
Boarding Schools, i. 327; ii. 133
Bodichon, Madame, ii. 145, 327, 329
Bohun, Humphrey de, ii. 318
Boleyn, Anne, i. 77
——, Sir Thomas, i. 77
Bolingbroke, Lord, ii. 29
Bologna Institute, ii. 273

Bolton, Duchess of. *See* Fenton, Lavinia.
Bonheur, Rosa, ii. 169
Boniface, Archbishop, i. 78
——, St., i. 18
Bonner, Bishop, i. 242
Booth, Mrs., ii. 249
Borthwick, Lady, ii. 298
Boucher, Family of, i. 80
Boucherett, Miss Jessie, ii. 328
Bouverie, Mrs., ii. 35
Bovell, Miss, ii. 287
Bovill, Lord Chief Justice, ii. 336
Bracegirdle, Mrs., i. 289
Braidwood, Mrs., ii. 251
Brand, Thomas, i. 280
Brentford, ii. 61
Brewing, i. 7, 9, 44, 45
Bridget, St., i. 76
Bright, Mr. Jacob, ii. 335, 337
——, John, ii. 336
Brihtric, King of Wessex, ii. 7
Bristol, ii. 65
——, Lord, ii. 29, 31
British and Foreign School Society, ii. 252
Broadley Reid, Mrs., ii. 304
Broc, Edeline de, ii. 316
Brougham, Lord, ii. 327
Browne, Dame Agnes, i. 71
Buchan, Dowager Countess of, ii. 289
Buckingham, Dowager Duchess of, i. 127
Buckingham, Duchess of, ii. 80
——, Duke of, i. 222; ii. 318
Bulkeley, Katherine, Abbess, i. 82
Burdett-Coutts, Baroness, ii. 231–233
Burgundy, Duke of, i. 35
Burke, ii. 55
Burleigh, Lord, i. 134
Burnet, Bishop, i. 221, 250; ii. 48
——, Bishop, Wife of, i. 260
Burney, Dr., ii. 55
Burton, Lady, ii. 122
——, Miss Mary, ii. 343
Bury St. Edmund, ii. 29
Buss, Miss Frances Mary, ii. 146, 147, 328
Bute, Lady, i. 347
Butler, Lady, ii. 169. *See* Thompson, Miss Elizabeth
Butler, Mrs. Josephine, ii. 73, 234, 328
Byles, Justice, ii. 336
Byron, Lady, ii. 66

C

Cameroons Peak, ii. 131, 132
Cane, Lucy Countess of, ii. 333
Canning, Countess, ii. 292
Canterbury, ii. 6
Canute, ii. 7
Canvassing, ii. 38
Cape Horn, ii. 131
Carey, William, ii. 253
Carlisle, Anne, i. 290
——, Countess of, ii. 304
——, Earl of, ii. 326
——, Lady, ii. 35
Caroline of Anspach, ii. 15–18
—— of Brunswick, ii. 18
Carpenter, Dr., ii. 65
——, Mary, ii. 59, 65–70
——, Mrs., i. 296
Carrington, Lord, ii. 309
Carter, Elizabeth, ii. 48, 51–58, 61
Castlemaine, Lady, i. 182
Catharine of Aragon, i. 131
—— of France, ii. 15
Catholics, Roman, i. 241
Catteshill, Manor of, ii. 316
Cavendish, Sir William, i. 162
Caxton, i. 23
Cecil, Princess, i. 13
——, Lady Gwendolen, ii. 298
Celibacy, i. 88, 93
Celleor, Mrs. Elizabeth, ii. 277, 278
Cenwalch, King of Wessex, ii. 5
Chaloner, Sir Thomas, i. 134
Champernon, Lady, i. 133
Champion, Office of, ii. 317, 318
Chaplin, Miss, ii. 287
Chapone, Mrs., ii. 41, 46

Charity, i. 101–105
Charles I., i. 148
Charles II., i. 146, 245
Charleville, Lady, ii. 107
Charlie, Prince, i. 230–232
Charlotte, Queen, ii. 17
Chaworth, Lady, i. 157
Cheddar, ii. 60, 63, 64
Cherois de la, Mrs., ii. 290
Chessar, Miss, ii. 309
Chesterfield, Lord, i. 334; ii. 29
Chomeley, Colonel, i. 223, 224
Chudleigh, Lady Mary, i. 345
Churchill, Lady Randolph, ii. 298
——, Lord, i. 203
Church (Anglican), i. 250, 251, 255, 256, 274; ii. 21
Church (Roman), i. 179, 180, 250, 251, 255
—— in eighteenth century, ii. 75–77
——, the, i. 19, 31–33, 56–58, 60, 61, 72, 83–99, 103–105, 235–241, 252, 308
Cibber, Mr., i. 233
——, Mrs., i. 287
Citizenesses, i. 309
Cittern, i. 300
Clarence, Duke of, i. 159
Clark, Mrs. Frances, i. 103
Clergy, Anglican, i. 249
——, Inferior, ii. 82
Clewer Sisterhood, ii. 239, 241
Clifford, Isabella de, ii. 314
Clive, Kitty, i. 287
Cobbe, Margaret, ii. 277
——, Miss Frances Power, ii. 235, 328, 332, 338
Cobden, Mrs. R., ii. 328
Cobham, Eleanor, i. 34
——, Lady, ii. 32
Coburg, Duchess of, ii. 280
Coke, Sir Anthony, i. 134, 135
——, Sir Edward, ii. 334
——, Sir John, wife of, i. 190
Coleman, Mrs., i. 281
Companies, i. 48–50
Composers, ii. 172
Congreve, i. 284
Cons, Miss Emma, ii. 232
Convent, Benedictine, i. 59
Convent, Godstow, i. 80
——, St. Helen's, i. 73
—— Schools, i. 21, 22, 57
——, Sion, i. 71
——, Winchester, i. 79
Conventionality, i. 308
Conventual life, i. 122
Conway, Viscountess, i. 103
Conyngham, Lady, ii. 292
Conyngesby, Mrs., i. 220
Cook, Sir Charles, i. 215
Cooke, Miss, ii. 252
Corfe Castle, i. 214
Cork, Lady, ii. 107
Costume, i. 225
Cosway, Mrs., i. 294, 295
Cowell, Mrs. Herbert, ii. 309
Crewe, Mrs., ii. 37
Cromwell, Dowager Lady, i. 204
——, Major Henry, i. 203
——, Oliver, i. 161, 200, 201, 216
——, Thomas, i. 80, 94
Currey, Miss, ii. 305
Curtis, Anne, i. 246
Cuthbert, St., i. 91

D

Dacre Craven, Mrs., ii. 264
Dare, Christopher, i. 242
Davenant, i. 283
Davenport Hill, Mr. Recorder, ii. 332
Davies, Miss Emily, ii. 145, 309, 328
——, Moll, i. 289
Denward, Mrs., ii. 61
Derby, Countess of, i. 207–211
——, Earl of, i. 209, 212
——, Lady, ii. 35
Devonshire, Duchess of, i. 345; ii. 34–39

Dickson, Miss, ii. 290
Disraeli, Mr., ii. 329
Dissenters, ii. 16, 17, 25, 26
Domestic servant, ii. 208-226
—— service, ii. 210
—— work, ii. 209
Downer, Ann, i. 248
Dress, i. 315, 316
Dressmakers, ii. 196
Drum, i. 324
Duncannon, Lady, ii. 35
Durham Church, i. 90-91
Dyer, Mary, i. 98
Dymoke, Lady, ii. 318

E

Eadburga, Abbess, i. 18, 77
Earconbert, King of Kent, i. 77
East Grinstead, ii. 239
Eastlake, Sir Charles, ii. 165, 166
East London Nursing Society, ii. 263
Edgeworth, Maria, ii. 65
Edinburgh, ii. 286
Education, i. 17-25, 38, 120, 121, 126, 145-154; ii. 141
——, female, i. 325-327; ii. 42-47, 133-135
——, girls', ii. 133
—— in France, i. 177; ii. 134, 138
——, modern, ii. 102
——, musical, i. 298, 299
——, national, ii. 68
——, the new, ii. 137
Edward I., i. 9; ii. 13
Edward II., ii. 11
Edward III., i. 30, 45, 91; ii. 14
Edward IV., ii. 9
Edward VI., i. 94
Edward the Martyr, ii. 7
Edwards, Jeannot, ii. 337
Edwin, King of Northumbria, i. 64
——, Lady Charlotte, ii. 32
Ela of Salisbury, ii. 315
Eleanor of Castile, ii. 13, 14
Elections, i. 228
Electric telegraph, ii. 178
Elfleda, Abbess, i. 65
Elfrida, ii. 7
Elizabeth, Queen, i. 94, 119, 132, 148, 163, 301; ii. 22
Elmer, Bishop of London, i. 22
Emma, wife of Ethelred, ii. 7
Erasmus, i. 132, 141
Erkenwald, St., i. 78
Erlegh, family of, i. 80
Essex, Earl of, i. 217
Ethelburga, St., i. 64
Ethelred, i. 64; ii. 7
Ethelreda, St., i. 64
Evelyn, John, i. 147, 184, 186, 187, 256, 280
——, Mary, i. 147
Everyday Life, i. 308-312
Exeter, Bishop of, ii. 289
Eyre, Mrs. Susannah, i. 102

F

Factories and Workshops Bill, 1895, ii. 206
Factory Acts, ii. 205
—— System, ii. 200
Fairfax, Admiral, ii. 142
——, Sir Thomas, i. 209, 210, 222, 224
Fane, Lady G. C., ii. 336
Fanshawe, Lady, i. 215, 216
——, Sir Richard, i. 215
Fara, Abbess, i. 77
Farren, Miss, i. 287
Fashion, i. 328, 329
Fawcett, Henry, ii. 180, 331, 339
——, Mrs., ii. 305, 329, 332, 340
Fell, Judge, i. 246
——, Margaret, i. 246
Female clerk, the, ii. 181, 182
Fenton, Lavinia, ii. 171
Fenwick-Miller, Mrs., ii. 309

Ferrar, Nicholas, i. 252
Feudalism, i. 28, 29, 34, 36, 113-125
Fisher, Dr. John, i. 102
Fitzroy, Mrs., i. 345
Foreign Missions, ii. 250
Fortescue, Sir John, i. 133
Fox, Charles James, ii. 34-39
——, George, i. 188, 245, 247
——, Lady Susan, ii. 341
——, W. J., M. P., ii. 326
Francis, Serjeant, i. 197
Francis III., Duke of Modena, i. 292
French, Mrs., ii. 280
Fry, Elizabeth, ii. 59, 71, 72
——, Mrs. Theodore, ii. 301
Fuseli, i. 293

G

Gaming, ii. 30
Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, i. 242
Garrett, Dr. Elizabeth, ii. 284-286, 309, 329
Garrick, i. 233; ii. 55
Gatten, Hamo de, ii. 317
Gaunt, Mrs., i. 244
——, John of, daughters, i. 23
Gay, ii. 29
Geddes, Jenny, i. 98
General Post Office, ii. 180
Gentlewoman in trade, the, ii. 176-186
George I., ii. 18
George II., Court of, ii. 29
George IV., ii. 18
Gilds, i. 39-55
Girls' Friendly Society, ii. 235
Girton College, ii. 145
Gittern, i. 300
Gladstone, Mr., ii. 331
——, Mrs., ii. 304
Glanvil, Joseph, i. 274
Gloucester, Duke of, i. 34, 35, 159
Godwin, Earl, ii. 7
Goldsmid, Lady, ii. 329
Gordon, Duchess of, ii. 25
Governesses' Benevolent Institution, ii. 143
Grammar Schools, i. 121
Grant, Miss, ii. 252
Gray, Dame Isabell, i. 103
Greashill Castle, i. 214, 215
Great Chamberlain, office of, ii. 318
Great Lady, the, i. 333-350
——, the Modern, ii. 105-115
Grenville, Sir Richard, i. 215
Gresham, Lady, i. 103
Grey, Lady Jane, i. 123. 133, 134
Grindal, Dr., i. 133
Groom of the Stole, ii. 28
Grote, Mrs., ii. 168
Gunning, the sisters, i. 345
Gwynn, Nell, i. 182, 289

H

Hadfield, Maria, i. 295. *See* Cosway, Mrs.
Hale, Sir Matthew, i. 178, 272
Halkett, Lady Anne, i. 150, 190, 224; ii. 260, 261
Hamilton, Lady Archibald, ii. 32
Hammerton, Hester, ii. 319
Hampson, Miss, ii. 332
Handcock, Wm., ii. 55
Hare, Miss, ii. 332
Harley, Lady Brilliana, i. 165
Harman, Dr. John, i. 132
Harrington, Lucy, i. 154
Haslam, Mrs., ii. 340
Hastings, Lady Elizabeth, i. 256, 259
——, Mr. G. W., ii. 67, 327
——, Mrs. Sarah, ii. 280
Hayes, Catherine, ii. 171
Hengrave Hall, ii. 212
Henrietta, Queen Maria, i. 206, 280, 282
Henry IV., ii. 14
Henry VI., i. 19, 34
Henry VII., i. 23
Henry VIII., i. 25, 128, 139, 160; ii. 18, 19

Herbalists, the, ii. 272
Herbert, George, i. 251, 253
Herford, Miss Laura, ii. 165, 166
Herschell, Caroline, i. 297; ii. 139
Hervey, Lord, ii. 33
——, Lady, ii. 30
Hewling, Benjamin, i. 203
——, Hannah, i. 203, 204
——, William, i. 203
High Constable, office of, ii. 317
Higher Education of Women, ii. 326
Hilda, St., i. 64
Hildelitha, i. 78
Hill, Miss Octavia, ii. 232
Hitchin, ii. 145
Hobart, Hon. Lady, ii. 36
Hoby, Sir Philip, i. 134
Holland, Countess of, i. 282
——, Lady, i. 136; ii. 107
——, Mr., Governor of Manchester, i. 209
—— House, i. 282
Hood, Lord, ii. 36
Hopkins, Miss Ellice, ii. 234
Horn, Count de, i. 293
Housewifery, i. 11, 12
House of Lords, storming of, ii. 31
Howard, Lady Elizabeth, i. 156, 158
——, Lord William, i. 101
——, Mrs., Countess of Suffolk, i. 337
Hughes, Judge, ii. 331
——, Mrs., i. 289
Humphrey, i. 302
——, de Bohun, ii. 318
Hungerford, Sir Edward, i. 212, 213
Huntingdon, Countess of, ii. 31, 32, 80
Hutchinson, Mrs., i. 149, 207, 208.

I

Idleness, i. 347
Ilchester, Lord, ii. 41
Ina, King of Wessex, ii. 6
India, women of, ii. 70
Innocent VIII., i. 263
Inoculation, ii. 48
Isabella of France, ii. 11

J

Jacqueline, Countess of Hainault, i. 34. 35
Jacquetta, Duchess of Bedford, i. 290
James I., i. 148, 175
James II., i. 220
Jeanne de Valois, i. 30
Jefferies, Joyce, i. 217–220
Jeffreys, Judge, i. 202, 203, 243
Jerome, St., i. 74, 89
Jersey, Lady, ii. 293, 303.
Jewell, Bishop, i. 263
Jex-Blake, Miss S., ii. 286, 287
Joanna of Navarre, ii. 14
Johnson, ii. 55
Jones, Brynmor, Mr., ii. 337
Jordan, Mrs., i. 287

K

Kaufmann, Angelica, i. 291–293, 295
Kent, Duchess of, ii. 280
Kiffin, William, i. 222
Kilbarchan, ii. 343
Killigrew, i. 283
——, Anne, i. 291
Kingsley, Miss Mary, ii. 131, 132
Kingswood, ii. 66
Kinross, ii. 260
Kirkwall, ii. 344
Knightley, Lady, ii. 303
Kyteler, Lady Alice, i, 268, 269
Kytson Family, ii. 212

L

Labouchere, Mr., ii. 331
Labour Commission, ii. 203
Lacock Abbey, ii. 315

Ladies' National Association, ii. 73
Lamb, Lady Caroline, ii. 107
Laud, Archbishop, i. 282
Lauder, Miss, ii. 343
Law, i. 18, 42
—— (Ecclesiastical), i. 90, 91
—— (Labour), i. 39
—— (Poor), i. 100
——, William, i. 286
Laycock, Professor, ii. 286
Learning, i. 17–25, 128, 129, 132–134, 137, 138, 145, 154
Lecky, W. H., ii. 346
Lee, Sir Henry, i. 228, 229
Lees, Miss Florence. *See* Dacre Craven, Mrs.
Lely, Sir Peter, i. 291
Leobgitha, i. 18, 77
Lepell, Mary. *See* Hervey, Lady
Lhassa, ii. 129
Lincoln, Battle of, ii. 11
Lind-Goldschmidt, Madame, ii. 168
Lisle, Lady A. de, i. 243
——, Viscount, i. 215
Literature, i. 17, 24, 37; ii. 149–161
Little Gidding, i. 252
Llangynog, ii. 337
Lloyd, Miss, i. 345; ii. 332
——, Captain Hugh, i. 291, 293
Lock, Matthew, i. 303
Loder, Kate Fanny, ii. 173
Lollard Persecution, i. 240
London County Council, ii. 308
——, Dr., i. 81
—— School Board, ii. 308
—— School of Medicine for Women, ii. 289
Londonderry, Marchioness of, ii. 298
Longespée, William, ii. 315
Louis XI., i. 29
Lovys Bourgeois, Madame, ii. 280
Lucas, Sir Charles, i. 152
——, Lady, i. 165
——, Mrs., ii. 332, 336
Lute, i. 300, 301
Luther, i. 263
Lynacre, Dr., i. 131
Lyndhurst, Lord, ii. 165
Lyttleton, Lord, ii. 55

M

Mcdonald, Allan, i. 234
——, Flora, i. 232–234
——, Sir John, i. 234
M'Laren, Duncan, Mr., ii. 331
——, Duncan, Mrs., ii. 345
Maidservants, i. 303
——, directions for, ii. 213, 214
——, Tax on, ii. 37
Manchester Post-office, ii. 180
Manners, i. 322–324
Manor, Lord, ii. 337
Mansfield, Lord, i. 335
Mapp, Mrs., ii. 282
March, Anne D. P., Countess of, ii. 333
Margaret of Anjou, ii. 11, 15
—— of Hereford, ii. 317
Marlborough, Dowager Duchess of, ii. 298
——, Duchess of, ii. 20, 22, 26, 27, 29, 80, 335
——, Duke of, ii. 22
Marriage, i. 88, 168, 177, 192; ii. 96, 97
—— (Priestly), i. 92, 93
Marshal, office of, ii. 315
Marshall, Rebecca, i. 288
——, Mrs. Anne, i. 281, 288
Martin, St., i. 89
Martineau, Harriet, ii. 73
Martyr, i. 235
Martyrs, Protestant, i. 238, 241
——, Roman Catholic, i. 237
Mary, Princess, i. 131, 132
——, Queen, i. 94
——, Tudor, ii. 5
Mason, Miss, ii. 312
Massey, Alice, ii. 277
Masson, Professor, ii. 286
Matilda, Empress, ii. 12

Matilda of Boulogne, ii. 11, 12
—— of Flanders, ii. 12
—— of Scotland, ii. 12, 13
Maud of Ramsbury, i. 92
Maurice, Frederick Denison, ii. 143
Maxwell, Mrs., ii. 335
Medical Degrees, ii. 289
—— Schools, ii. 289
Medicine, i. 265; ii. 271
Mendelssohn, i. 297
——, Fanny, i. 297
Merrington, Miss Martha, ii. 309
Metcalf, Rachel, ii. 250
Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, ii. 235
Meynel, Mrs., i. 345
Miall, Mrs., ii. 329
Mico, Lady, i. 103
Middle Classes, i. 26–38
Middleton, Ann, i. 223
——, Dr., ii. 49
——, Lady, i. 103
——, Mary, i. 223
Midwifery, ii. 274
Mill, J. S., ii. 328, 329, 331–333
——, Stuart, Mrs., ii. 326
Missionaries, South American, ii. 131
Missionary Work, ii. 251
Mitford, Miss, ii. 64
Modern Politics, ii. 292–306
Molesworth, Mrs., i. 337
Molyneux, Mrs., i. 345
Monasteries, Double, i. 62, 63, 72
Monboddo, Lord, ii. 56
Monk, General, i. 245
Monks, Horton, ii. 48, 49
Monsell, Harriet, ii. 239, 242
Montacute, Family of, i. 80
Montagu, Edward, ii. 48–49
——, Lady Mary Wortley, i. 347; ii. 42, 47, 48, 50, 154
——, Mrs., i. 344; ii. 51–57
Moore, Mr., ii. 122
Morals, Public, i. 317–320
More, Dr., ii. 44
——, Hannah, ii. 45, 56, 59–65
More, Margaret, i. 135
——, Sir Thomas, i. 135
——, Sir Thomas, wife of, i. 90
Morris, Rev. Edmund, ii. 30
Moser, George, i. 291
——, Mary, 291–293
Mounsey, Ann, ii. 172
——, Elizabeth, ii. 172
Mulcaster, Richard, i. 142
Murray, Mistress Anne, i. 225–227
——, Thomas, i. 225
Musgrave, Lady Julian, i. 223, 224
Music, i. 297–304
Musical Amateur, the, ii. 175

N

Napery, Office of, ii. 316
Nassau Senior, Mrs., ii. 312
National Nursing Association, ii. 265
—— Society for Woman's Suffrage, ii. 339
Needlework, i. 7, 8, 12, 106, 107, 156
Nevill, Lady, i. 301
Neville, Richard, i. 168
Newcastle, Duchess of, i. 151, 153, 166, 189
——, Duke of, i. 166
Newell, Miss, ii. 252
Newgate Prison, ii. 71, 72
Newman, Professor F. W., ii. 333
Newnham College, ii. 145
Nicholaa de la Haye, ii. 315
Nigel, Bishop of Ely, i. 92
Nightingale, Miss Florence, ii. 73, 257, 258, 262, 263
Noel, Bridget, i. 184
Norfolk, Mary, Countess of, ii. 333
——, Duchess of, ii. 315
North, Miss Marianne, ii. 122
Northcote, James, i. 294
——, Sir Stafford, ii. 68.
Northumberland, Earl of, i. 227
Nuneham, Lady, ii. 44

Nunnery, Protestant, i. 252, 256
Nursing, ii. 256–270
Nursing Sisterhoods, ii. 258

O

O'Brien, ii. 41
Obstetrics, ii. 275, 281
Offaley, Lettice Digby, Baroness of, i. 214, 215
Ogilvie, Lady, i. 230, 231
Ogowe River, ii. 132
Old Maid, i. 314
Oldfield, Mrs., i. 287
Opera Singers, ii. 170, 171
Ormond, Countess of, ii. 333
——, Duchess of, ii. 28
Osborne, Bernal, Mr. ii. 331
Oswy, King, ii. 8
Oxford, Dowager Countess of, i. 160
——, Earl of, i. 158
——, Matilda, Countess of, ii. 333

P

Packington, Dame Dorothy, ii. 334
Painters, Landscape, i. 295
——, Portrait, i. 295
Painting, Flower and Fruit, i. 296
——, Miniature, i. 296
Pakington, Sir John, ii. 67
Palmerston, Lady, ii. 293
Parish Councils Act, 1894, ii. 310
Parr, Katherine, ii. 18
Partridge, Miss Ellen, ii. 169
Paston, Dame Margaret, i. 7
——, Elizabeth, i. 123
——, Sir John, i. 7
Patents, ii. 189
Paterson, Miss Helen, ii. 166. *See* Allingham, Mrs.
Pearce, Alma, ii. 337
Pechey, Miss, ii. 287
Pelham, Lady Joan, i. 15, 16, 23
——, Miss, i. 345
Pembroke, Anne, Countess of, i. 103, 160–162, 167; ii. 314, 315
——, Dowager Countess of, ii. 316
——, Henry, Earl of, i. 136
——, Johanna F. A., Countess of, ii. 333
——, Lady, i. 345
——, Mary Sidney, Countess of, i. 136, 137
Penda, ii. 8
Pendarves, Mrs., ii. 32
Penzance, ii. 181
Pepys, i. 281
Perth, Duchess of, i. 230–232
Petersham, Lady Caroline, i. 346
Petitioners, i. 193–204
Petitions, Woman's Suffrage, ii. 332, 333
Pevensey Castle, i. 23
Pfeiffer, Ida, ii. 118–120
Philanthropy, i. 57; ii. 59–74, 227–236
Philip the Fair, i. 10
Philippa of Hainault, i. 91; ii. 14
Pierrepont, Evelyn, ii. 50
Pitt, ii. 25, 29, 36
Police-matrons, ii. 313
Politics, i. 329, 330, 346, 347; ii. 10, 22–24, 30, 33
Poor-law Guardians, ii. 309
Pope, ii. 29
—— John XVII., i. 269
Portland, Duchess of, i. 345; ii. 37, 49
——, Duke and Duchess of, i. 342
Porter, Mrs., i. 287
Preaching, Women's, i. 249
Priest, Mr. James, i. 304
Primrose League, ii. 298–303
Printing, i. 23; ii. 190
Protestantism, i. 255
Prynne, i. 281
Puckeringe, Jane, i. 170, 171
Pulsford, Mr., i. 197
Pulteney, ii. 55
Purcell, i. 302, 304

Puritanism, i. 270
Puritans, i. 264
Pym, i. 196, 199, 200
Pyne, Louisa, ii. 171

Q

Quakers, i. 244-249
Queen-consort, ii. 10, 18
—— Regent, ii. 18
—— Victoria, ii. 280
Queen's College, ii. 143, 144, 326
Queens-regnant, ii. 19
——, Saxon, ii. 6, 7
——, Tudor, ii. 19
Queensberry, Duchess of, 31, 32
Querouaille, Louise de, i. 182

R

Racquet, i. 323
Ragged Schools, ii. 65, 73
Raleigh, Sir Walter, i. 207
Ranelagh, Lady, i. 221, 222
Rangership of Windsor Park, ii. 29
Rawlins, Sophia, i. 293
Rebellion (Monmouth), i. 202, 203
Reeve and headle, office of, ii. 320
Reformatory Schools, ii. 66
Registered Medical Women, ii. 290
Registry Office, ii. 221
Religion, influence of, i. 236, 237
Reynolds, Fanny, i. 294
——, Sir Joshua, i. 294
Richmond, Countess of, i. 23-25, 102, 127
——, Duchess of, ii. 293
Ridley, Mrs., i. 103
Rigby, Colonel, i. 210-212
Robertson, Miss A. Isabella, ii. 341, 342
——, Mrs. James, i. 296
Robinson, Anastasia, ii. 171
Robinson, Elizabeth, ii. 48-50. *See* Montagu, Mrs.
——, Mrs., ii. 35
Rochester, Lady Anne, i. 228, 229
——, Lady Henry Hyde, ii. 28
Roe, William, i. 223
Romanists, i. 239
Roos, Lord, i. 157, 158
——, Mary de, ii. 333
Rout, i, 324
Royal Academy, ii. 167, 168
—— Academy Schools, ii. 165
—— Free Hospital, ii. 289
—— Geographical Society, ii. 140
—— National Pension Fund for Nurses, ii. 266
Rupert, Prince, i. 212
Russell, Lady Arthur, ii. 305
——, Lady William, i. 259
——, Lord John, i. 134; ii. 68
——, Lord William, i. 222, 259-260.
——, Mrs. T. W., ii. 305
——, Sir Charles, ii. 331
Russell-Gurney Bill, ii. 289
Rutland, Duchess of, i. 345

S

Sacheverell, Dr., ii. 21
Sale, Lady, ii. 131
——, Sir Robert, ii. 131
Salerno, ii. 273
Salisbury, Bishop of, ii. 17
——, Lady, ii. 35-36
——, Marchioness of, ii. 295, 298
——, Margaret, Countess of, i. 159, 167
——, Richard, Earl of, i. 159
Salting, i. 7
Salvation Army, ii. 247, 248
Sanders, Mrs., i. 281. *See* Betterton, Mrs.
Sandon, Lord, ii. 67
Sanitary Inspectors, ii. 312
Saunderson, Lady Frances, ii. 32

Saunderson, Sir William, ii. 32
Savil, Sir Henry, i. 133
Saxburga, ii. 5
Scarisbryche, Jane, ii. 277
Scotland, Domestic life, i. 310, 311
Scott, Mrs., ii. 32
Scrivelsby Manor, ii. 318
Sedgmoor, Battle of, i. 243
Sellon, Miss, ii. 239
Selwyn, Charles, ii. 30
——, George, ii. 30
——, Mrs., ii. 30
Serres, Miss, i. 296
Servants, costume of, ii. 214, 215
——, general, ii. 224
—— in Elizabethan Times, ii. 211
—— in Saxon Times, ii. 212
——, wages of, ii. 221–223
Shaftesbury, Abbess of, i. 65
——, Lord, ii. 205, 289
Shanghai, ii. 129
Sharp, Mrs. Jane, ii. 279
Sheriff, Office of, ii. 314, 315
Sherrard, Mrs. i. 168
Shirt-makers, ii. 196
Shop-women, ii. 190, 191
Shrewsbury, Earl of, i. 162, 163
Siddons, Sarah, i. 287
Sidney, Mr., i. 157
——, Sir Philip, i. 136, 137
Siebold, Madame, ii. 280
Sigtryg, ii. 8
Simpson, Sir James, ii. 286
Sion Monastery, i. 69, 75, 76
Sisterhoods, ii. 237–245
Skippon, Serjeant-Major, i. 197
Smith, Lady Euan, ii. 130
——, Mrs. Magdalen, i. 171
——, Sir Charles Euan, ii. 130
Snow, Captain Barker, ii. 131
——, Mrs., ii. 131
Social Life, ii. 91–93, 107, 110, 111
Societies, Religious, ii. 79
Society of Lady Artists, ii. 168
Somerset, Duchess of, ii. 28
——, Duke of, i. 135
Somerset, Lady Henry, ii. 234
Somerville, Mrs. Mary, ii. 65, 139, 141, 142, 155, 329
Song-writers, ii. 173
Sophia of Zell, ii. 17
South Sea Bubble, i. 337
Spencer, John, ii. 27
Spilsbury, Miss, i. 296
Spinning, i. 7, 9
Spinster, i. 11
Stage, the, i. 276–289; ii. 162–165
——, the French, i. 279
Stagg, Mrs. Anne, i. 199
Stair, Dowager Countess of, ii. 25
——, Lord, ii. 16
Stanhope, Lady Hester, ii. 120–122
Stanley of Alderley, Dowager Lady, ii. 289, 304
Stansfeld, Mr. James, ii. 312, 331
——, Mrs., ii. 332
Stephen, King, i. 93; ii. 9
Stephens, Mrs. Joanna, ii. 282
Stillingfleet, Benjamin, ii. 54
——, Bishop, i. 250
Stokes, Mistress, i. 35
St. Paul, Mary de, ii. 333
Strode, Colonel, i. 212
Stuart, Frances, i. 182
Suffolk, Countess of, i, 338, 345; ii, 25, 29, 30, 31, 81
Sunday-schools, ii. 61
Sunderland, Countess of, i. 157
——, Lady, i. 337
Surgeons' Hall, Edinburgh, ii. 287
Surr, Mrs., ii. 309
Swanwick, Miss Anna, ii. 329
Swift, i. 335; ii. 29
Swinfield, Bishop, i. 9

T

Talbot, Miss, ii. 57
Tanner, Mrs., ii. 329
Taste, i. 334, 335
Taylor, Miss Annie, ii. 128–130

Taylor, Miss Helen, ii. 309, 329, 330
——, Mrs. P. A., ii. 332
Taylour, Miss Jane, ii. 342, 343
Teck, Duchess of, i. 108
Telegraph Clerks, ii. 178
—— Company, ii. 179
Tertre, Madame, ii. 280
Test and Corporation Acts, ii. 16
Theatre Royal, Clare Market, i. 281
——, the, i. 278, 285
Thelwell, Peter, i. 171
Thompson, Miss Elizabeth, ii. 169. *See* Butler, Lady
Thorne, Mrs., ii. 287
Thornton, Miss, ii. 252
——, Mrs. Alice, i. 150
Thurso, ii. 344
Tibet, ii. 129, 130
Tierra del Fuego, ii. 131
Toasts, i, 285
Tod, Miss, ii. 305, 340
Tofts, Katherine, ii. 171.
Trade, i. 26, 42, 45
—— Unions, i. 46; ii. 196
Training Home for Nurses, Liverpool, ii. 264
Travelling, ii. 116–132
Tremouille, Duc de, i. 209.
Trimmer, Mrs. Sarah, ii. 60–62
Trusler, Dr., i. 286
Twining, Miss Louisa, ii. 266
Type-writing, ii. 190
Tyrconnel, Lord, ii. 33

U

Udall, Master of Eton, i. 132, 140
Usher, office of, ii. 316

V

Vandyck, i. 290
Vavasour, Margaret, ii. 334
Venturi, Madame, ii. 329
Verney, Sir Ralph, i. 158, 168, 228, 229; ii. 28
Vesey, Mrs., ii. 53–57
——, Sir Thomas, ii. 55
Virginals, i. 300, 301
Vives, Ludovicus, i. 131

W

Waldegrave, Ladies, ii. 35
Wales, Prince of, i. 232
Walpole, Horace, ii. 17, 29, 41
——, Sir Robert, ii. 16, 17
Walsh, Joseph, i. 171
War (Civil), i. 193–205, 234
Wardour Castle, i. 212
Wardship, i. 20
Warwick, Anne, Countess of, i. 159, 258, 259
Watchmaking, i. 42–44
Watkin, Sir E. W., ii. 331
Weaving, i. 7, 9
Wedmore, ii. 63
Wentworth, Lady Anne, i. 150
——, Lady, i. 292
——, Lady Arbella, i. 150
——, Lady Harriet, ii. 41
Werburga, St., i. 64
Wesley, John, i. 273; ii. 247
Westminster, Duke of, ii. 265
—— Election, ii. 34–39
Westmoreland, Jane, Countess of, i. 135
——, Lady, ii. 32
Westlake, Mrs., ii. 309
White, Miss Jessie Meriton, ii. 144
Whitehead, George, i. 248
Whiteshill, ii. 337
Whitfield, ii. 31, 80, 81
Wilberforce, Mr., ii. 64
Wilfrid, Bishop of Leicester, i. 65
Willes, Justice, ii. 336
William I., ii. 12, 13
William III., ii. 26
William IV., Count of Holland, i. 34
Willoughby de Eresby, Lady, ii. 319

Willughby, Dr. Percy, ii. 280
——, Miss, ii. 280, 281
Wilson, Mrs. Margaret, ii. 251
Wilton, Abbess of, i. 65
Wimborne, Lady, ii. 298
Winchester, Abbess of, i. 65
Witchcraft, i. 261–274
Wives, i. 321
Woffington, Peg, i. 287
Wollstonecraft, Mary, ii. 324, 325
Wolsey, i. 160
Wolverton, Lady, i. 108
Woman, single, ii. 95, 96
Woman's Suffrage, ii. 323–346
Women Commissioners, ii. 313
—— doctors, ii. 271–291
—— farmers, ii. 196
——, married, ii. 98, 99
—— novelists, ii. 150, 151–153, 159
——, status of, ii. 88
——, unmarried, ii. 101
Women's Franchise League, ii. 340
Women's Liberal Associations, ii. 301
—— Liberal Federation, ii. 300–304
—— Liberal Unionist Association, ii. 304, 305
Workhouse Infirmaries, ii. 257
Wray, Sir Cecil, ii. 35–37
Wriothesley, Lord Chancellor, i. 242
Writing, (Letter), i. 38
——, i. 19, 21, 23
Wroth, Lady, i. 154
Wrotham, family of, i. 80
Wulfere, King of Mercia, i. 64
Wycherley, i. 284
Wygram, Mr. Clifford, ii. 266
Wykeham, William of, i. 19
Wynkyn de Worde, i. 23

Y

Yates, Mr. Thomas, i. 228, 229
York, Archbishop of, i. 74
——, Duchess Anne of, i. 66
——, Duke of, i. 225–227
Young, ii. 29

Z

Zucchi, Antonio, i. 293

THE END.

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